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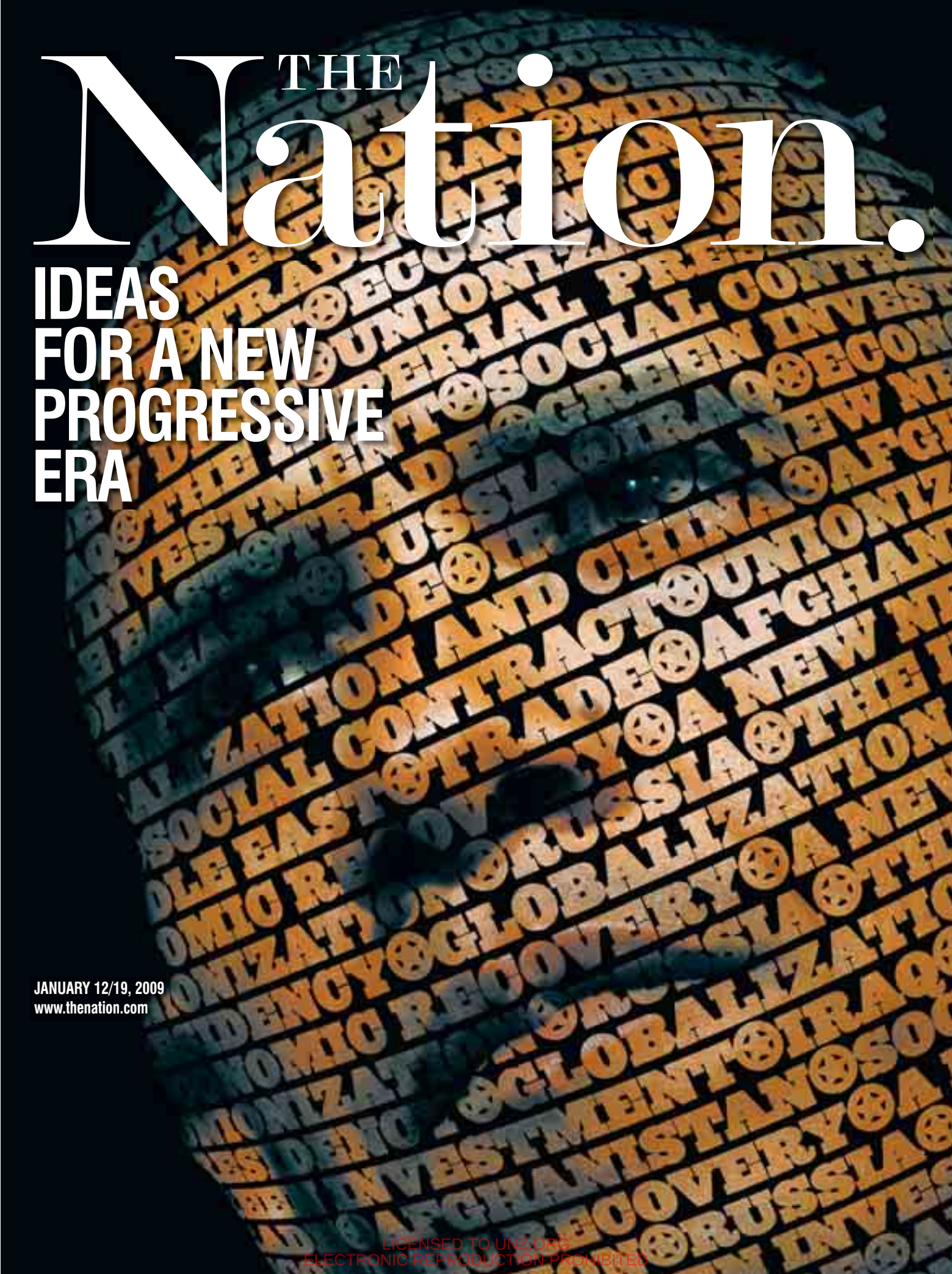
IDEAS FOR A NEW PROGRESSIVE ERA



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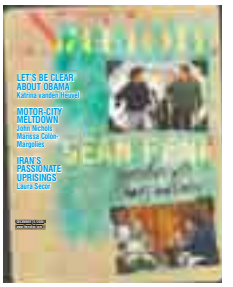

Vietnam Revisited, Part Two

San Francisco; Taylor, Mich.

A response to Nick Turse's "A My Lai a Month" [Dec. 1; "Letters," Dec. 29]: The Mekong Delta is the most populous area of Vietnam. While serving as infantrymen with the Ninth Division, encountering civilians was a daily occurrence while "on the line" in the Delta. Treatment with respect, and at times kindness, was not uncommon. Our battalion, sometimes attached to Col. Ira Hunt's brigade, operated in Kien Hoa and Dinh Tuong provinces. The idea of "body count" was common throughout the US forces during the Vietnam War, but there was no heavy emphasis on this from our commanders. Most "contact" took place along rivers and heavily wooded areas, where Vietcong secreted their activity.

There was a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Vietnam. We often went on night river ambush patrols to engage enemy activity. It wasn't often we encountered night river traffic, which we would engage. It was believed that if one knew of such a curfew and lived where one would be killed by venturing out at night, one did not do so. The times we did intercept and engage sampans was very late at night, hardly the time one would be late from market. And even at that, there were times we held fire because of the obvious chance for civilian error.

No doubt civilians were at times caught in the crossfire of a fight, and if resistance was heavy, "support" was usually requested, and that is likely why every one of the many hundreds of homes we were in had a bunker. But the idea that there was a full-blown concerted effort in place to kill wantonly for "body count," indiscriminately, is absolutely foreign to our experience, and probably most others. We are deeply offended by the allegation and its broad implication against the men we served with and the Ninth Infantry Division.

John Carney, *Sp4, C Co, 3/39th, 9th Inf Div., August 1968–February 1969*
Kenneth Beheler, *Plt Sgt., C Co, 3/39th, 9th Inf Div., September 1968–July 1969*

letters@thenation.com

Turse Replies

New York City

I thank John Carney and Kenneth Beheler for, however obliquely, acknowledging that civilian casualties resulted from the American war in Vietnam, the pervasiveness of the "idea of 'body count'" and the frequent intrusions of US troops into the homes, and lives, of Vietnamese trying to survive in the ravaged Mekong Delta. Indeed, the fact that many of the hundreds of homes they searched had shelters attests to the frequency and intensity of the bombing and shelling in and around villages. Unfortunately, these bunkers could not always stand up under US bombs and shells. I've spoken to too many survivors from the Delta whose relatives were killed when their bunkers collapsed.

No one can deny the great deal of individual variability in the experience of US troops who served in Vietnam, especially those involved in an operation as large and long as Speedy Express. The fact that the allegations Carney and Beheler take issue with arose from fellow US veterans attests to that. But certainly many troops never committed or witnessed any atrocities.

I was especially struck by the writers' recounting of night ambushes on the Delta's waterways. In my web-only sidebar, "The Vietnam Exposé That Wasn't," I recounted Alex Shimkin's discovery of the mass killing of civilians resulting from sampans that were likely out after curfew. Further, the main whistleblower in "A My Lai a Month" actually wrote about civilians killed "in the early morning when the Vietnamese might be going to work in the fields or to market." He wrote, "I asked my platoon leader about this and he said it was OK to zap them if they move during curfew. But he couldn't answer if they knew it was curfew." I note that Carney and Beheler write only that "there were times we held fire" when civilians were spotted. There were, of course, those other times.

Nick Turse

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Ideas for a New Era

The historic election of Barack Obama holds the promise of launching a new progressive era in the life of our nation. But as we have learned from earlier periods of our history, progressive reform is not born from one election but out of a sustained struggle involving a mobilized public seeking change. With the defeat of John McCain, one part of that struggle is over. But another has begun, as different groups within the broad Obama coalition work to influence the first crucial years of his presidency.

EDITORIAL

While many progressives are understandably concerned about Obama's center-right appointments, the deep crises we confront—the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression and the disastrous consequences of neocon foreign policy—have compelled many establishment figures to embrace change. We believe that the scale and pace of this change must be dramatic, not incremental. In this special issue, on the eve of Obama's inauguration, we take up some of the pivotal issues on which his presidency and a new progressive era will turn.

We begin with the first initiative of the Obama presidency—passage of a Main Street economic recovery program focused on public investment in areas vital to our future. As Robert L. Borosage and Eric Lotke argue, Obama's legacy will be determined not by his initial program but by whether he charts a bold course for the economy—a new New Deal defined by a massive, multiyear public investment agenda—that challenges the economic strategy of the past several decades. At the heart of such a new New Deal, Jeff Madrick suggests, must be an expanded social contract based on rising wages, robust investment in education and universal, affordable healthcare.

This new social contract will not be possible without a much stronger voice for working people in the economic life of the country. Putting working people at the center of his reforms is key to the success of Obama's promise to bring about a new energy future, as Lisa Margonelli argues. To date, mainstream efforts to promote a more efficient and low-carbon energy system have ignored the interests and potential power of working Americans. Nor is the economic crisis merely domestic. Sherle R. Schwenninger engages the central question of defining a new international economic strategy that restructures the system of international finance and trade to foster rising wages, decent work and balanced growth.

The global economic challenge reveals an inescapable reality: foreign policy cannot be put on hold while the United States deals with the economic crisis. Reordering America's international priorities is important not just to improving our moral standing and position in the world but to realizing the goal of broadly shared prosperity at home and abroad. Juan Cole therefore lays out why it is critical that the Obama administration wind down America's occupation in Iraq as quickly as possible.

Indeed, the success of Obama's foreign policy depends on rejecting the disastrous "war on terror" and rethinking support for increasing US military forces in Afghanistan—which threatens to bog us down in a quagmire, drain resources needed for economic recovery at home and destabilize nuclear Pakistan. And America's image in the greater Middle East would be vastly improved if the Obama administration were to advance a just settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Henry Siegman suggests. Likewise, Anatol Lieven explains the need to avoid a new cold war with Russia and establish a constructive working relationship with Moscow so as to move aggressively on nuclear disarmament and resolve the Iranian nuclear question and the conflict in Afghanistan. And Aziz

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NATION POLL

Most Valuable Progressive?

VIDEO NATION

Victims and vigilantes

CALENDAR

Post your event

Huq takes up the fundamental struggle over rescuing the Republic, curbing the imperial presidency and reasserting the rights of Americans and the constitutional system of checks and balances.

There are, of course, other pivotal issues *The Nation* will champion in the coming weeks and months. We welcome your suggestions on what we might propose to expand the debate. For now, as we begin this era, we remember that in his first speech as president-elect, Obama told us that "the true strength of our nation comes not from the might of our arms or the scale of our wealth but from the enduring power of our ideals, democracy, liberty, opportunity and unyielding hope." After years of playing defense, let's free our imaginations, build creative coalitions and craft smart strategies that will push Obama and a new Congress to seize the moment and reorder America's priorities at home and abroad.

Good God, Bad God

Barack Obama's choice of evangelical pastor

Rick Warren to give the invocation at the inauguration has provoked outrage from progressives, who have condemned it as a slap at his base and at gay and lesbian supporters in particular. Wasn't Obama's election a repudiation of the religious right? Couldn't he have picked a more progressive figure—like civil rights leader Joseph Lowery, who supports same-sex marriage and is giving the closing benediction? Why won't Democrats behave like Republicans, who reward their religious base with state spoils both symbolic and monetary?

COMMENT

I understand the left's sense of betrayal, but this reaction to Obama's choice is off the mark. It's a sign of how much we have conceded to the religious right that almost nobody asked why there should be an invocation at all. Sure, it's an argument they're unlikely to win, in part because Obama is a synergistically religious politician who enthusiastically speaks the language of faith and government (though for many years there was no invocation at the inauguration, and the famously devout John Quincy Adams refused to be sworn in on the Bible because he thought it should be reserved for worship). But it's just as unlikely that Obama will be shamed into rescinding Warren's invitation. So as long as the left is on the side of losing arguments, why not make the case for secularism, the separation of church and state and the purity of the constitutional oath? Why accept the Rovian premise that elections are referendums on religion and then squabble over which God ("a more inclusive God," say gay critics) was most recently legitimated by the vote?

In this culture war calculus, Obama's decision to split the difference—Warren at the top, Lowery at the close—makes perfect sense. After all, Warren and Obama are not as unlike as progressives would like to believe. They disagree about abortion, but both want to expand faith-based initiatives for social services. Indeed, Warren has earned accolades from many Democrats (including Obama) as a new breed of evangelical interested in poverty reduction and climate change. They cheered as he and his wife, Kay, became major players in the AIDS world even though Warren's programs, some funded by Bush's global AIDS

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Noted.

OBAMA'S GREEN TEAM: Barack Obama is bringing science back to Washington. After eight years in which science was ignored or censored by the Bush administration and right-wingers in Congress, Obama's choices of environmental and energy aides promise a very different approach. **Steven Chu** (tapped as energy secretary), **John Holdren** (White House science adviser) and **Jane Lubchenco** (head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) are first-rate intellects who have long records of speaking out on behalf of the public good.

Chu, who won the **Nobel Prize for Physics** in 1997, has called energy "the single most important problem that science has to solve" and grasps basic points that have been absent from the Washington debate in recent years, such as the fact that energy efficiency is the fastest, cheapest way to fight climate change and that burning more coal would be a disaster unless the carbon dioxide can be reliably captured and stored—a very big if.

Holdren, a professor of environmental policy at Harvard, has been advising Obama for months, which may account for the president-elect's understanding—rare among US politicians—that climate change "is happening faster than even the most pessimistic scientists were anticipating a couple of years ago." Lubchenco, a professor at Oregon State University who ranks among the most distinguished oceanographers in the world, has led efforts to restore ecological balance in the seas—a "Mutiny for the Bounty," she calls it—which requires reversing climate change.

Getting the science right is no guarantee that good policies will follow, but it is a prerequisite. Obama recognizes that investing in the new green economy is a solution to many problems, and he couldn't have chosen more capable and committed scientists to assist in that essential work. MARK HERTSGAARD

BLOGGERS UNDER FIRE: According to a **Committee to Protect Journalists** (CPJ) report released December 4, of the 125 media workers in prison—a list that includes **Ibrahim Jassam**, a photographer held in US custody in Iraq—more of them published online than in any other medium.

The majority of online journalists behind bars come from China, the most high-profile of the many countries where **Yahoo**, **Google** and **Microsoft** have been accused of complicity with human rights violations. CPJ cites the **Global Network Initiative** as one effort to address this. Developed by these companies in cooperation with investors, academics and human rights organizations, the initiative details a set of principles aimed at protecting users' freedom of expression and privacy. It's difficult to tell whether the voluntary program will rein in the actions of the corporations.

"They've been named and shamed before, and their behavior has not really changed," said **Antony Loewenstein**, author of *The Blogging Revolution*. Participants are asked to assess their impact in new markets and to maintain transparency, but they are not required to break local laws or pull out of offending countries.

Meanwhile, Loewenstein stressed his faith in the motives of, if not Yahoo, Google and Microsoft, then the human rights groups involved. "I'm skeptical only because I've seen these companies operating in China, and it's really ugly," he said. "I'm happy to be proven wrong." SARAH ARNOLD

SECRETARY SOLIS: The old union song asked, "Which side are you on?" And California Congresswoman **Hilda Solis**, **Barack Obama**'s nominee to serve as labor secretary, has always answered, Yes! The daughter of immigrant workers from Nicaragua and Mexico who met in a Los Angeles citizenship class, Solis was raised in and around the labor movement. She chose **United Farm Workers** co-founder **Dolores Huerta** as a role model, marched on picket lines and championed **SEIU** organizing drives as a California legislator in the 1990s.

When the Clinton administration prevailed upon Democratic Congressman **Matthew Martinez** to support permanent normalization of trade relations with China, the LA County Federation of Labor drafted Solis to mount a primary challenge to the nine-term incumbent. She whipped him and came to Washington as, in the words of the late federation leader **Miguel Contreras**, "a warrior for working families." She's been that: siding with labor 97 percent of the time, taking a lead in promoting legislation to make it easier to organize unions and defending immigrants from attacks by Republicans and Democrats. She's also been an outspoken critic of the Bush administration's free-trade agenda—unlike former Dallas Mayor **Ron Kirk**, Obama's disappointing choice to serve as US trade representative.

The labor secretary definitely sits at the far end of the cabinet table, playing a less pivotal role than the treasury secretary and White House advisers when it comes to economic policy. But having Solis at the table makes this a decidedly more worker-friendly administration. Her energy, knowledge of the issues and record of advocating for economic and social justice suggest that in an administration where there is much talk about forging a new New Deal, Solis could be the most significant labor secretary since **Frances Perkins** served with **Franklin Roosevelt**. JOHN NICHOLS

HONOR ROLL: *The Nation*'s third annual Student Writing Contest, sponsored by the **BIL Charitable Trust** to recognize the best in student writing and thinking, received hundreds of entries from around the country. From a pool of ten finalists, we picked a high school and a college winner. The college winner, **Victor Lopez**, is a student at **Guilford Tech Community College** in North Carolina. His essay, "Transcending Trauma," begins with a powerful recollection of his childhood in the foster care system and then asks President-elect Obama to "commission a federal oversight panel to overhaul the treatment of those in foster care and others who cannot care for themselves." The high school winner, **Laine Alison Zalac** from **Columbus Alternative High School** in Ohio, notes that her school "doesn't have clocks that work, but less than three miles away is a suburban school with an indoor swimming pool." Zalac asks the next president to "address educational inequities and do it swiftly and with commitment." To read Lopez's and Zalac's essays in full, as well as those of the other finalists, visit thenation.com/student.

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plan, advocated abstinence-only education and Christian conversion. Obama and the Democrats may now limit cases of evangelizing on the federal dime and inject science into the mix, but the door to proselytizing and privatization remains wide open.

As for the hot issue of gay marriage, Warren campaigned for Proposition 8, which Obama opposed, but both are against same-sex marriage on religious grounds. Warren invokes familiar right-wing aspersions—that homosexuality is akin to incest, pedophilia and polygamy. Obama's position comes off as more considerate, though no less religiously determined. "I'm a Christian," he said in 2004, "and so, although I try not to have my religious beliefs dominate or determine my political views on this issue…my religious beliefs say that marriage is something sanctified between a man and a woman."

But here's the bright spot for gays and lesbians: there's actually common ground that they might find with Obama and Pastor Rick—it's just not on religious terms. Both say they support full equal rights for gays and lesbians. Let's test this premise by pushing forward a federal civil union bill that guarantees all the rights of marriage for same-sex couples, as Obama has suggested in his platform. Perhaps over time, some straights will want in on this God-free institution too, and we'll have civil unions for everyone. Then Warren will be free to sanctify as marriages only the unions he likes. And I'll be free to sanctify mine by whatever idol I choose, or to choose not to at all.

RICHARD KIM

Obama for America 2.0?

Barack Obama does not look like any other American president, but more important, his supporters look different from every other president's base. They are the most connected national constituency in history.

During the campaign, Obama's aides relentlessly recruited voters into several networks at a time. More than a million people asked for campaign text messages on their cellphones. Two million joined MyBO, a website fusing social networking with volunteer work, while more than 5 million supported Obama's profile on social sites like Facebook. Most famously, 13 million voters signed up for regular e-mails, fundraising pitches and other communications. On election day, a staggering 25 percent of Obama voters were already directly linked to him—and one another—through these networks. Campaigns largely dissolve after elections, but this infrastructure remains intact.

Presidents have always needed intermediaries to rally their base, from the press to party machinery. But Obama has a direct line—or several—to his most active supporters. "We've never seen anything like this," says Micah Sifry, who runs the Internet politics site TechPresident.com. Obama has "the ability to directly reach millions of people in a very targeted way [and to] activate support district by district." Since the election his aides have been experimenting with how to use the networks, for governance and for postcampaign politicking.

On the governance side, the transition team is recruiting people to monitor transition meetings, pose public questions to the staff and share input on selected policies, starting with healthcare. Twenty thousand people participated in the first user-generated press conference, which allowed the public to write and rank questions. The bailout, civil liberties and marijuana legalization were popular topics. The transition team's Internet director, Macon Phillips, said the queries "weren't only ones you'd expect from supporters, which is a good thing." Phillips did Internet outreach for the campaign, but he stressed that the objectives have shifted. "In the campaign we were organizing people. Now it's more conversational, trying to listen and engage people that weren't engaged in the campaign."

The political track is more complicated. A few people still gather at the old Chicago campaign headquarters to draft e-mails and plan volunteer events. The e-mail list could have used a break—7,000 messages went out during the campaign—but the focus is on maintaining momentum. E-mails with announcements, videos, events and donation requests keep pouring out of BarackObama.com. But what is BarackObama.com now? So far, it feels like a campaign without an election. In December supporters met at 4,000 house parties and reported back on the top issues discussed. At one gathering in Brooklyn, the twenty middle-aged attendees were upbeat but unclear on the meeting's purpose. Volunteers posted hundreds of photos from the events on Obama's Flickr account, featuring diverse and enthusiastic gatherings that ranged from a handful of people to several hundred. Beyond volunteer labor, the postcampaign organization will have a budget and paid staff, according to a senior field operative who spoke at Rootscamp, an organizing conference in Washington. Some aides refer to this operation as "Obama for America 2.0," though the name has not yet stuck, and no one knows exactly what it will do.

Many Obama supporters want the network to turn from electoral politics to lobbying. After the election, half a million activists responded to an e-mail survey about the road ahead. The most popular goal was to help the administration "pass legislation," according to campaign manager David Plouffe. If Obama's initiatives stall in Congress, these activists will presumably back him instead of their local representatives. Combining the White House bully pulpit with constituent lobbying could have a dramatic effect on Obama's presidency. Previous presi-

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

A Lesson From Muntader Al-Zaida

To most Americans it came as news:
To show your disrespect you throw your shoes
Directly at the guy you're disrespecting
(When shoes are not at all what he's expecting).
Should this catch on here in the USA,
It's possible George Bush should stay away
From, say, New Orleans. Otherwise, I'd posit,
He'd see more shoes than in Imelda's closet.

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About Your Professor

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dents have gone over the heads of Congress by appealing to the public, of course, but never with a parallel whip operation targeting representatives in their backyards. If the pressure works, the experiment could even alter the conventional balance of power. After all, citizens typically lobby the legislature for their own policy goals—not on behalf of another branch of government. While George W. Bush boosted executive power by routing around Congress, Obama may fortify executive power by mobilizing citizens to roll right over Congress.

Top-down legislative advocacy, however, is not the only aspiration for members of Obama's network. The campaign thrived on bottom-up participation, with volunteers taking charge of projects, organizing themselves and sometimes challenging Obama's positions. "There's been a lot of hand-wringing about what Obama is going to do with his e-mail list, but that has it a bit backward," says David Dayen, who writes the progressive blog D-Day. "It's really, What is the list going to do with Obama?" Marshall Ganz, the famed United Farm Workers organizer who advised the Obama and Dean campaigns, also argues that the network should not be treated as a list to be managed. Obama won "through the creation of a movement," Ganz observed in a recent YouTube interview, but that does not mean its members can be directed from Washington. "Can he lead it from the presidency?" Ganz asked. "Probably not."

Yochai Benkler, who wrote the Internet bible *The Wealth of Networks*, is advocating an empowered civic activism for the Obama era. At a December summit for Internet politics at Harvard, where he and Ganz teach, Benkler warned the Obama staff in attendance to avoid focusing solely on "mobilization for the next battle." Now there is a special opportunity, he stressed, to serve the "core of democracy" by fostering relevant "participatory forums for people to set their own agenda."

This vision is more ambitious than responding to surveys or submitting questions to the administration. To shift presidential priorities, network activists must by definition reach beyond the boundaries of the incumbent agenda. Obama's supporters will have to decide whether fulfilling the movement sometimes means pushing the president, or if such efforts will always be degraded as "counterproductive" by the narrow metrics of tactical politics. In other words, are any issues bigger than Obama?

"Obama's technologically networked supporters are unlikely to desert him or pressure him very hard, wanting so much to believe that the 'change' mantra will mean something other than swapping Hillary for Condi," predicts John Stauber, a netroots activist and critic. "While Obama became the candidate of choice for most on the left, the fact that he is well to the right of his supporters remains a challenge to his base."

One precedent for more participatory agenda-setting occurred this past summer, when Obama backed Bush's domestic-spying bill. Supporters used Obama's social networking portal to protest the move. Thousands of activists discussed the issue through direct e-mails, thanks to the campaign's tools, and they developed goals together. The protest swiftly became the largest self-organized group on the site at the time. That growth, in turn, drew widespread attention and a direct response from Obama, sans media filter, to his critical supporters. While he did not change his vote, the effort clearly forced a civil liberties argument onto the agenda—a result that formal, funded organizations often fail to achieve. "Traditionally, unless a citizen group convinced the media to cover their events, a candidate or representative wouldn't necessarily know about them," notes Sam Graham-Felsen, the Obama campaign's official blogger. Based on visibility alone, Obama's network can play a significant role in pushing him to address issues beyond the choices presented by the media and formal interest groups.

The protest group's evolution, however, also shows how hard it is to maintain a decentralized pressure network. The campaign's top-down networks never stopped growing, but the protest group's e-mail list has fallen to one-third its original size. About thirty members are organizing a new push for the inauguration, but they have not regained traction with many supporters, blogs or the press. Jon Pincus, a social-network activist and early group leader, believes similar efforts can influence the administration if there are conflicts on core issues like Iraq or torture. "During the campaign these efforts could be centered primarily on MyBarackObama," he said. "But now you'd probably have to work across several other social networks, using MyBO as only one of the nodes in the network-of-networks."

Meanwhile, the self-organized groups that were built to elect Obama are still talking to one another. "A lot of the homemade groups on MyBarackObama are still updating and sending out e-mails about what's going on," says Kevin Flynn, who worked on the campaign's blogging team in Chicago. "I still get eight e-mails a day from grassroots groups," he told me in late December. While they were not created for protest, some of these networks could morph into hubs to pressure Obama. Take the student network, one of the largest groups on the site. During the campaign it held 19,633 grassroots events, raised more than $1.7 million and hosted a constant stream of many-to-many communication through more than 170,000 blog entries. As this article went to press, members were posting criticism of Obama for inviting Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at the inauguration.

These networks should not be defined, however, only by whether they take orders or try to give them. Beyond their orientation toward Obama, millions of citizens are now more primed to activate and lead one another. A whopping 10 percent of the survey respondents even said they want to run for office. Now they have a good model for how to do it. ARI MELBER

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The Kiss

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss.
—Psalm 85:10

They were young and beautiful and kissing, two brown-skinned girls on a red leather banquette; kissing as people do when they are hungry and soaring and, usually, alone. They weren't alone, wedged there between the thick seats and small tables at the Lenox Lounge in Harlem. Nobody barked, "Get a room!" Life swirled easily about them, dollar bills passing from hand to hand across the crowd to the fellow behind the bar; beers all around or cocktails and high-pitched chatter, as

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if it were the most natural thing in the world for two girls on a banquette to be drinking each other in, one long gulp, then another; a taste, a tease, a head thrown back in laughter and an arm bent high to catch her stiff-brimmed hat before it fell.

That was election day, an age ago, it seems. Like the sailor kissing the nurse in Times Square on V-J Day in Eisenstaedt's storied photograph, like the boy gripping his girlfriend's bottom as she leaps to embrace him in a shadowed hall on the day Stalin died in Komar and Melamid's luscious painting *Thirty Years Ago 1953*, those amorous girls in an Art Deco bar were the iconic image of social happiness, November 4, 2008.

For a moment, a few hours, the world, or at least Harlem, was passionate and in love. Not with Barack Obama, with itself—each one with the friend or stranger by his side and beyond to the next one, and the next after that, a common love expressed commonly, in hands squeezed or swinging hugs or deep, public kisses. "Love is in the air, people," a drummer on the uptown 1 train had announced earlier in the day, and later it was in the streets. A million glances were exchanged that electric night; a million fingers brushed lightly against each other. Zing! Who knows how many awoke the next morning in the arms of someone no longer a stranger? If there were none, it wouldn't matter; that it was possible was the thing. People were alive and in love with possibility.

In an instant it was over, as it had to be. Elections are not revolutions. Nor are presidents even particularly sturdy progressives. By definition they crook the knee to capital, and concede, simply by running for the job at the top of the nuclear heap, a willingness to commit mass murder. Obama couldn't be "one of us" any more than his predecessors could. And yet, on the cusp of the inaugural, some leftists are disappointed, angry, glumly awaiting the inevitable celebrations like party kisses on New Year's Eve, surface exuberance masking the essential emptiness of the ritual. Some who were once full of hope now grouse about the dreadful cabinet picks or strain for positive explanations as the bigot Rick Warren prepares his inaugural blessing. Those who were always cynical regard the popular effusions over the first black president as simple-minded, hysterical, swoony.

But the job of the left is not to be hopeful in or even angry at presidents, and it is not to scold the people. An insidious aspect of the recent period, and particularly the past eight years, has been the gross personalization of politics, the obsession with venal or greedy or supposedly stupid leaders, with the lies and corruptions of persons rather than the crushing nature of class relations and corrupt systems. So Bush is an idiot. Clinton was a dog. Obama is a hero or a fraud. "The left"? What is it? A term so hazy in concept that right-wing radio applies it to Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid without being laughed off the air, and the only live demand that almost anyone else associated with it in November was marriage.

Clearly, the radical imagination needs an airing. So let us pause, amid the muddle of the moment, in this season of renewal and fresh starts, to consider fundamental things. Let us pause to reflect on the iconography of that kiss, so thick with refusals and affirmations.

First, the kiss was carnal, not marital; an expression of being, rather than legal right or obligation. As gay marriage advocates simultaneously mourned the success of Proposition 8 in California, the kissing pair in the merry crowd wordlessly declared that sexuality isn't a right or a privilege any more than smiling is, or skin color. Intrinsic to being, it is un-legislatable, unvotable, in any moral world. The California campaign for marriage had been mum on sex. On one level, that was logical; marriage is a property contract, a business arrangement, a religious sacrament granted the color of law. But like every antigay ballot initiative since the 1970s, Prop 8 was at base a referendum on sex, the kind deserving of reward versus the kind that ought to be damned to hell. Kissing puts sex at the center of the story. Those two women might want to get married tomorrow, but what they symbolized was that passion is its own reward. And if, morally, sexual ardor is not votable, neither should it be the ticket—for anyone—to health insurance or old-age pensions or wages or tax breaks or any properly social benefit granted limitedly to contractual couples on the expectation that they will have sex and, by hook or by crook, reproduce the workforce.

Second, it was a public liberty, at once intensely intimate (there is a reason that kissing on the mouth is often the line that workers who are paid for sex will not cross) and part of a communal groove. For decades courts have settled issues of sexual freedom on the basis of privacy. Privacy matters; everyone wants it, even as we are pummeled to expect less and less. But unmoored from an ethic of equality and human solidarity, privacy also provides a weasel's excuse: *You know, I don't care what people do in their bedroom, but I don't want to hear about it, know about it, see it; I don't want to know, OK?* And in the broader political economy, it is capitalism's pinched concession to liberty, the sweetener in a compulsory package of private property, private gain, private political deals, privatization and You're on your own, Jack. If the popular energy on display that night in Harlem offered the merest glimpse of another world, the kiss distilled its many virtues. Yes, a thousand times yes, it said, to liberty but also equality; to sensuality but also common feeling; to romantic love but also class solidarity.

That last because, finally, the kiss took place among the plain people, workers all, in a setting of idleness and creative pleasure, in a neighborhood historically home to the black working class, to some of the great popular contributions to world culture, and to a towering movement for human freedom. Billie Holiday sang "Strange Fruit" at the Lenox Lounge in 1939, the year it opened. Langston Hughes listened to jazz in the zebra-striped back room, as did James Baldwin and Malcolm X. Those are now talking points on a tour guide's cheat sheet, as this last of New York's original Art Deco jazz clubs has become a destination, and Harlem, until the crash, a developer's playground and dispossession zone. They figure in the iconography of the kiss not as nostalgia (Baldwin couldn't kiss his boyfriend in the Lenox Lounge) but as markers along the resistance road that made it possible for those women to be there openly loving each other that night. There are a lot of griefs as well as giddiness along that road, a lot of broken rules and broken hearts, no presidents but a lot of nameless people who made history and who, against the odds and the wars, the attack of the bankers and bought government, will have to make it again.

JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

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Eric Alterman

Say Good Night, Charlie

Harlem Representative and House Ways and Means Committee chair Charles Rangel has lived a blessed political life. Raised tough and poor by various members of his extended family, almost killed in Korea, he bounced around as a small-time hustler before finding his calling as a Harlem clubhouse pol with extraordinary good luck. In 1968, for instance, then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller, a liberal Republican, seized on the then-young first-term Democratic Assemblyman as a potential ally. When, in their first meeting, Rangel expressed concern over his GOP opponent, the governor waved him off and made a quick phone call. "You just got the Republican endorsement," Rocky explained after hanging up. "You don't have to worry now."

But if Rangel has not been corrupted *absolutely* by his thirty-seven years in Congress, he has come pretty damn close. Thanks to the energetic reporting of the *New York Times*—which has been teaching its tabloid competitors a thing or two about how to uncover and milk a local scandal—we now know:

§ Rangel has enjoyed the use of *four* rent-stabilized luxury apartments for which he pays a powerful local developer barely half their market value. (Almost no one in New York occupies more than one such apartment—which is a good thing, given the scarcity of affordable housing);

§ Despite the above, Rangel, as reported by the *New York Post*, also enjoys a "homestead" tax exemption for the four-bedroom home he owns in Washington, DC.

§ Rangel earmarked $1.9 million for the Charles B. Rangel Center for Public Service at City College of New York, and solicited donors on official stationery and in person—including at least one million-dollar donation from an oil-drilling executive that was followed by Rangel's immediate reversal on protecting a key offshore tax loophole;

§ Rangel managed to… um… forget to declare more than $75,000 in rental income from a $1,100-per-night villa in the Dominican Republic he has owned since 1988. His district is nearly half Hispanic, but Rangel claims "cultural and language barriers" have made it impossible to file the proper returns. (The willful filing of a false tax return is a state and federal felony.)

§ According to *Politico*, Rangel recently funneled nearly $80,000 in campaign funds to a company run by his son Steven Rangel for a couple of "slapped together" websites that "should have cost no more than $900." (Remember, owing to the magic of a friendly gerrymandered district, Rangel has not faced any real competition for his seat in decades. His election campaigns are largely exercises in self-gratification.)

One could go on, but *sheee-it*, as Clay Davis would put it, our point ought to be clear by now. By some standards—even by some New York standards—the corruption of Charlie Rangel is a minor league affair. After all, New York's senior senator, Charles Schumer, bears a significant responsibility for the onset of the financial crisis on Wall Street, owing to his eagerness to demand weaker and weaker regulation for the people writing the checks to fund his political ambitions. Again thanks to excellent *Times* reporting, we know that Schumer, as a member of the Banking and Finance Committees, took steps to "protect industry players from government oversight and tougher rules.… Over the years, he has also helped save financial institutions billions of dollars in higher taxes or fees." These included weakening bank regulations, undercutting efforts to regulate credit-rating agencies and interfering with efforts to force corporations to increase the transparency of their balance sheets. Perhaps most egregiously, this putative champion of his state's middle class successfully scuttled his party's efforts to demand that hedge fund billionaires pay an equivalent share of their earnings in taxes as do janitors, schoolteachers and the rest of us.

But while Schumer's bequests to billionaires may be morally objectionable and politically poisonous, nobody has so far questioned their legality. Rangel, by contrast, has demonstrated a clear contempt for the law as well as his constituents. What's more, he has all too effectively played the part in which conservatives have typically cast big-city liberals for decades: corrupt, hypocritical, concerned only for their own comfort and providing for their families at the expense of a gullible and exploited public. Need I repeat that this is the man who sits atop the most powerful tax-writing committee in Congress? It is almost as if the Republican Party had commissioned a modern-day Dr. Frankenstein to create a monster designed to undermine Barack Obama's claim of "change."

In short, Charlie Rangel, no less than Rod Blagojevich, is exactly the kind of politician—regardless of ethnicity—from whom Obama and Company need to disassociate themselves if the Democratic Party is to have any hope of earning the long-term trust of those middle-class Americans who believed Obama's promises. In Rangel's case, taking care of business ought not to carry any emotional baggage. During the Democratic primaries, Rangel not only strongly supported Obama's opponent Hillary Clinton in opposition to the views of his Harlem constituency; he consistently played fast and loose with the truth in order to make it appear that Obama—not Clinton—was raising the "race" issue. Making an accusation that was as self-evidently idiotic as it was false, Rangel complained that "for [Obama] to suggest that Dr. King could have signed [the Voting Rights Act] is absolutely stupid. It's absolutely dumb to infer that Dr. King, alone, passed the legislation and signed it into law." Of course, Obama did no such thing, and no one else associated with the Clinton campaign was slimy enough to imply differently.

Cutting Rangel loose would show the country just how serious the Obama administration is about transforming Washington's toxic culture of self-enrichment and teach his party a Chicago-style lesson in loyalty. Where I come from, we call that "God and profits." ■

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A New New Deal?

by ROBERT L. BOROSAGE AND ERIC LOTKE

When Richard Nixon announced that we are all Keynesians now, stagflation was confounding liberal economists, and conservatives were about to take over the commanding heights. Similarly, when Bill Clinton announced that "the era of big government is over," economic conservatism was about to take us off the cliff. Now "the era of big government is over" is over.

Garry Wills says Americans think of government only as a "necessary evil," a last resort. Well, folks, all the other resorts are boarded up. In November, America shed more than 500,000 jobs, the worst single-month record in thirty-four years. We lost more than 2 million over the course of 2008—and the crash is accelerating across the globe.

At the same time, America is falling apart, literally. We've witnessed the ghastly spectaculars: failure of the levees in New Orleans, collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, bursting of the steam pipe that shut down ten square blocks of Manhattan. But these tragic catastrophes are a small part of the growing costs of a conservative-era failure to invest in our future.

Conservative scorn for government has produced a crippling public-investment deficit. America's core infrastructure—roads, bridges, sewers, airports, trains, mass transit—is overcrowded, outdated and crumbling. The evidence, assembled by Eric Lotke in *The Investment Deficit in America*, issued by the Campaign for America's Future, is stark. Poor road conditions cost Americans billions in repairs and countless hours in delay. Though China opens a new subway system every year, and Europeans travel from Paris to Frankfurt on high-speed rail, American railroads don't have the funds needed even to maintain their outmoded infrastructure. Cities are suffering an epidemic of broken pipes and sinkholes, with the Environmental Protection Agency estimating more than 40,000 discharges of raw sewage into our drinking water, streams and homes each year from collapsing and overwhelmed sewage systems. The Education Department found that one-third of our schools are in such a severe state of disrepair that it "interferes with the delivery of instruction."

While the old basics are crumbling, twenty-first-century needs are being ignored. We maintain our addiction to oil while forfeiting our lead in renewable-energy technologies that will drive the green markets of the future. As two-income and single-parent families spread, we are failing to provide the high-quality childcare and pre-kindergarten programs vital to educating the next generation. Even as college or advanced training are deemed essential in the modern economy, more and more Americans find them priced out of reach. Our healthcare system is broken, consuming too many resources while providing care for too few. We invented the Internet, yet we rank about fifteenth among developed countries in access to broadband. In Japan, the average broadband speed is many times faster than our own. US federal investment in research and development is half what it was as a percentage of GDP in the 1960s.

It is time to invest in America. Recovery from this crisis provides the imperative; the investment deficit the targets. But turning the crisis into opportunity isn't sufficient. The fundamental question is whether the short-term response will lead to a new New Deal, a permanent expansion of the social contract.

'Substantial, Strategic and Sustained'

In December more than twenty union presidents, 120 economists and 100 progressive leaders, organized by the Institute for America's Future (IAF), released a statement calling for a "substantial, strategic and sustained" recovery plan for Main Street. The alliteration was an intentional contrast to the "timely, temporary and targeted" stimulus bill passed by Congress this past February. That mantra led to a timid plan focused on tax rebates. With Americans reeling from the collapse of housing prices and the stock market, stagnant wages, increasing debt and growing pessimism, the rebates had little

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effect. Less than 30 percent actually went into spending, as consumers sensibly used the bulk of the money to pay down debt. A good portion of what they spent went to goods imported from China or elsewhere. "Wal-Mart gift certificates," as the Rev. Jesse Jackson dubbed the rebates, had only a marginal and temporary effect on the economy.

The recovery plan has to be substantial—much bigger than the $150 billion spent on tax rebates last spring. Nobel Prize–winning economists Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz call for $1 trillion over two years; the IAF statement says the "floor" should be $900 billion over the same time span. The numbers floated for the Obama plan rise with each passing week as the downturn gets worse.

The reason is simple: government spending is the last resort. Interest rates are already near zero; in December fearful investors were essentially paying the Treasury interest to hold bonds. Consumers are cutting back; businesses are laying off workers and postponing investments. Exports will decline as the global economy turns down and the dollar moves up. States and localities are facing deep deficits and beginning to lay off police and teachers. The government is all that is left. The danger, as Krugman says, is that we'll do too little rather than too much.

Many recognize the need but worry about the deficit, headed toward $1 trillion for 2008. But a $14 trillion economy won't get the necessary boost from a small program. And with investors rushing to the dollar, the United States has no problem financing its ballooning deficits. Moreover, if the economy continues to sink, deficits will rise anyway, as tax revenue plummets and the costs of unemployment, welfare foreclosures and crime rise. Better to run the deficit of putting people to work than pay the price of their ruin.

The recovery plan should be strategic: spending on public works has a far greater effect on the economy than tax cuts. More money is spent; more jobs are created here rather than abroad. And if we invest in vital areas like energy, transportation and education, we can make a down payment on a more productive and competitive economy.

Finally, the recovery plan should be sustained. It will take a prolonged effort—two years is optimistic—to get the economy moving. Conservatives argue that New Deal spending failed to solve the Depression. In reality, Roosevelt's program dramatically reduced unemployment until, eager to return to balanced budgets, he raised taxes and cut spending in 1937 and immediately sent the economy back into a tailspin, which ended only when the deficit-financed mobilization for World War II kicked in. Again, the greater danger is to stop too soon, not to continue too long.

The Political Moment

From all indications, President-elect Obama gets this. In his November 24 press conference announcing his economic team, he pledged to "do what's required to jolt this economy back into shape." In his December 6 radio address, he committed to a bold recovery plan founded on strategic public investment to "help save or create" 2.5 million jobs "while rebuilding our infrastructure, improving our schools, reducing our dependence on oil and saving billions of dollars." Elements of the plan include a "massive effort" to make federal buildings energy-efficient, a project that would save taxpayers billions each year; the "largest new investment in national infrastructure since the creation of the federal highway system in the 1950s"; a "sweeping" program to upgrade and repair the nation's schools; and a new push to extend broadband to every corner of the country. Aides have floated numbers as high as $800 billion over two years.

There will be pitched battles in Congress over the size and composition of the recovery plan, but it will move rapidly into law. Some conservatives have already begun to discover their suppressed Keynesian ids. Emil Henry Jr., an assistant treasury secretary under Bush, writes that "investment in key infrastructure is consistent with Reagan principles" and that investment in "renewable energy will be key in our future." Neocon William Kristol suggests that "small-government Republicans" are an endangered species and urges Republicans to support a "huge public works stimulus package," directing the dollars to the "underfunded defense procurement rather than to fanciful green technologies." (Apparently, spending about as much as the rest of the world combined on our military isn't enough.) The rabidly antigovernment business lobbies—like the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers—are climbing aboard the infrastructure bandwagon, their corporate patrons desperate for contracts.

Democratic majorities in the new Congress will make House Republicans irrelevant to the debate, which is a good thing, since minority leader John Boehner argues that tax cuts alone, particularly capital-gains tax cuts, will fix what ails us. Senate Republicans will have greater sway, but given the state of the economy it is hard to imagine even minority leader Mitch McConnell—the Senate's Dr. No, who recently blocked aid to the struggling automakers—standing in the way of a massive recovery plan. Democratic Congressional leaders hope to have a plan ready for Obama to sign soon after he is inaugurated.

At the heart of this effort will be an expanded public sector making the necessary and strategic investments. An early emphasis will be on repairing existing roads and bridges, with immediate efficiency gains. Investment in a smart grid will accelerate the move to decentralized renewable energy. Retrofitting schools and public buildings will save energy and money. Computerizing medical records promises significant savings. Increasing Pell Grants will keep more students in college. As studies from the Minneapolis Federal Reserve show, investing in pre-K on the front side of life saves big time on the back side in lower crime, better health and lower dropout rates.

The New New Deal

Once the economy begins to recover, which may take much longer than people expect, we'll face the real challenge: sustaining the expanded public investment as a centerpiece of the new economy we build out of the collapse of the old.

If the United States wants to retain a broad middle class in a global economy, it has little choice but to finance a public social contract—from healthcare to lifelong learning to pensions above Social Security—that will be vital to providing the security that families need to prosper. Expanded public in-

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vestment—in research and development, twenty-first-century infrastructure and new energy—will be essential to sustaining a competitive high-wage economy. The new economy will also need several other building blocks: a new global economic strategy (see "Redoing Globalization" on page 30); a sensible industrial policy, beginning with a transition to new energy; an aggressive wage policy (providing living wages, empowering workers to organize, curbing executive plunder and fat bonuses) that helps distribute the benefits of profits and productivity gains fairly; and a reregulation of finance to make banking boring once more.

This broad transformation—a true new New Deal—entails a sea change in values and policy from the conservative era of the past thirty years. It will have to rally a public that yearns for greater security but is sensibly suspicious, after decades of conservative misrule, of the government's capacity to do anything. One of the monumental challenges facing the Obama administration will be to create a government that works. A vastly expanded and revitalized public sector will require a permanent expansion of expenditures that, once the economy revives, can't be funded by deficit spending. Most sensible economists agree that running a small fiscal deficit makes sense. So long as it is below the rate of inflation, the burden of our debt—its relation to the GDP—will continue to decline. But sustained expansion will require new resources that can come from a combination of new priorities and progressive taxes. Bring home the money squandered in follies like Iraq and reduce the flatulent military budget. Collect the $350 billion of taxes owed that the IRS estimates goes uncollected. Pass progressive tax reform, close egregious loopholes and simplify the tax code.

Is Obama ready to lead this broader fight? He'll have to forget about the "postpartisan" era of good feeling that is all the rage. The creation of a new New Deal will be the mother of all battles. In order to transform priorities, he will have to take on entrenched special interests—epitomized by the iron triangle of the military-industrial complex. Gearing up new investments and progressive taxes will require heroic efforts to overcome conservative resistance in both parties and then to avoid squandering the money on local boondoggles. Putting the necessary shackles around the financial sector will challenge the power of Wall Street. A revamped global economic strategy will threaten multinationals like Wal-Mart that prosper from driving down wages across the world.

Obama should have little trouble rallying public support for a bold recovery plan. People voted for change, and they are terrified about the economy. Aid for Main Street rather than Wall Street will be widely applauded. But forging a new New Deal out of the crisis, developing a new social contract and a new global strategy, will be a central struggle of the next few years.

Progressives shouldn't see this fight as a spectator sport. The New Deal we remember from Roosevelt—Social Security, the Wagner Act, the forty-hour week and fair labor standards—didn't take shape in his first 100 days or in his first year in office. It came only as Roosevelt was preparing for re-election and dealing with a broad populist challenge—a growing and militant labor movement, Huey Long, the Townsendites and more. The threat they posed helped spur Roosevelt and persuade legislators to move on what became known as the second New Deal. Progressives should be pushing hard now, girding ourselves for the battle royal that can no longer be avoided. ■

Beyond Rubinomics

Obama must break with the old economic model and forge a new social contract.

by JEFF MADRICK

Every time I read about a solution to the economic crisis these days, I invariably find an underlying assumption that once we are past all this, America will be just fine again. If we get the banks spending, if we stop the mortgage defaults, if we stimulate enough and if we reregulate the errant, greedy financial community, prosperity is sure to follow.

The economic emergency, however, is not simply the consequence of mindless, ideological deregulation and investment bubbles gone bust. It is the result of a narrowly conceived economic model and the failure of Washington's social contract with America, whose weaknesses were essentially disguised by ever more debt. To save America, that social contract has to change, and the economic model on which it is based has to be modified.

In the 1980s the nation abandoned a working social contract with its citizens that promised, and even produced, a wondrous but often cruel free-market colossus that worked justly and prosperously for most. The abandonment of that social contract

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was hailed as the rebirth of individualism and America's gift to the world: limited government. But it caused rising inequality and the decline and stagnation of median wages over the course of a generation. It also led to the rampant neglect of public goods vital to the citizens' welfare and the prosperity of the economy. Meantime, the nation lived off and ran through the public investment it made from the 1930s to the 1970s with little protest from politicians or mainstream economists.

Where Democrats differed from Republicans was in believing that the nation actually had a working social contract with its citizens. Workers who lost jobs or took lower wages due to rapid globalization and technological change required an enhanced safety net—more generous unemployment insurance, job training and perhaps, in the minds of bolder social critics, guaranteed healthcare and pension benefits. Many Democrats came to believe it would be wrong to interfere with the labor or financial markets in any way that could damage the nation's productivity gains or rapid rates of economic growth. Expanding the social safety net became the order of the day.

The Democrats fostered what Barnard economist Marcellus Andrews calls a "debt-based social contract." There were many causes of the Clinton boom of the late 1990s, including the rapid fall in the cost of computer power leading to the Internet revolution. But more critical, it is clearer in retrospect, were cheap money, speculative stock and housing prices and a lot of borrowing. Debt covered up the failures of the social contract and the economic model. It did not succeed in protecting workers from rising debt payments, lost healthcare benefits, withering pensions or job turnover.

Borrowing—and hence the cover-up—was encouraged by a high dollar, the pride of Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin. The high dollar attracted foreign money to compensate for America's lack of savings; Americans were unable to save because they had to borrow just to keep up. It was also propped up by the deregulation of international capital flows, led by Rubin and his number-two man, eventually his successor, Lawrence Summers. The financial community then innovatively supplied the credit to the masses, partly by circumventing the banking regulations designed to restrain overlending, a constant and regular danger since the dawn of formal banking itself. Rubin, Summers and Alan Greenspan presided over this.

The Bush administration made conditions significantly worse. The economy was thriving, but hourly wages fell between 2002 and 2007 for the typical worker, even including fringe benefits, and for the first time since World War II, median family income did not rise as a result of economic recovery. Had a typical worker's earnings risen in the expansion at a normal rate, it would have meant another $2,500 to $3,000 in annual income by 2007, perhaps three or four months of mortgage payments. It is likely many would not have had to default.

The longer-term result was that except during the late 1990s, compensation to workers has stagnated or risen marginally since the 1970s. For many, it fell. Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution and John Morton of the Pew Trust computed that a typical 30-year-old male in the middle of the pack now makes less than a typical male of the same age in the 1970s, discounted for inflation.

Access to borrowing was the salve that soothed the harsher reality of lower real wages. Now indebted Americans are paying a large price, losing homes and livelihoods. The debt has been the source of enormous wealth for a small privileged class located on Wall Street. Profits on Wall Street rose to 31 percent of all US profits.

Soaring oil prices in early 2008 forced America to face its lack of a serious national energy policy. Increasingly, prominent businessmen like Bernard Schwartz and Felix Rohatyn made the case for infrastructure investment, and the American Society of Civil Engineers awarded the nation's infrastructure a grade of D. Complaints about healthcare costs emanated from business, even as workers were saddled with a larger part of their annual health insurance bill.

The United States is no longer merely in crisis; it is in a state of emergency. The three phalanxes of attack are clear: provide the capital and asset support for the banks and shadow banks; stanch the mortgage defaults; stimulate the economy aggressively. That the Bush administration has been slow on the first, and as of December absent on the second and third, is a tribute to its laissez-faire Friedmanite ideology. The Democratic Congressional leadership now strongly argues for a large stimulus that includes serious public investment in infrastructure and energy alternatives. But it is by no means clear that the Obama administration, laden as it is with deficit hawks from the years of Rubinomics, will propose adequate plans to make the banks whole, stem the defaults—a very expensive proposition—re-regulate finance, or even stimulate the economy.

The nation needs a new social contract that deals with low wages and catches up with the tragic neglect of public assets.

But if Obama can get the economy back on four wheels again, then what?

The nation needs a new social contract that imaginatively deals with low wages and catches up with the tragic neglect of public assets over the past generation. This will involve institutional change, a meaningful shift in Federal Reserve objectives and frank and open Washington interference in the markets. It will require tolerance of government deficits but also eventual higher taxes. It need not undermine free trade, or even outsourcing, but it must begin to make developing countries respect their own workers and their own environments.

Most mainstream Democratic economists will have trouble accepting these statements of principle. If the economy does turn up in a year and a half or so, the good news for Democrats is that Obama, barring terrorist tragedies, is highly likely to win a second term. But fashioning the policies to re-establish a prosperous foundation for the nation will require a different way of thinking and a partial renunciation of the accepted economic model. Obama's appointments are—by historical standards, if

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not by current ones—center-right in a nation the election suggests wants to lean at least center left. Christina Romer, whose academic career is based on defending Friedmanite propositions, is to be head of the Council of Economic Advisors. The holdovers from Rubinomics are all deficit hawks: Summers and staffers from Rubin's Hamilton project at Brookings. Timothy Geithner is a Summers protégé. Summers and Rubin could not find money to invest in infrastructure in the flush 1990s, so obsessed were they with budget surpluses then.

According to their economic model, budget deficits reduce the nation's savings, push up interest rates and undermine long-term growth. Deficits must therefore be restrained. Meantime, the high dollar fortunately attracts foreign funds to compensate for the minimal savings, making borrowing at low rates still possible. A second component of this model is that rising wages are a cost that weakens profits and encourages businesses to raise prices. Resulting high inflation induces the Federal Reserve to step on the brakes. Modest, even tepid, wage gains, even when less than gains in productivity, are thus interpreted as healthy; they are less inflationary and the Fed then has the leeway to lower interest rates still more.

But there is another model. It suggests that deficits are often necessary to stimulate and maintain high rates of growth, and the higher wages that result in turn create the savings required for investment. Raising savings rates in the short run, on the other hand, often does just the opposite of what is intended. By reducing demand, it ultimately leads to slow growth, smaller incomes and less savings. Keynesian demand stimulus in an underperforming economy will not crowd out private investment due to federal borrowing but rather crowd it in by creating business opportunities due to more sales and prospective buying power. Strong sales are what generate capital investment.

Stimulate and maintain high rates of growth; higher wages will create the savings required for investment.

If the stimulus is spent on domestic investment in infrastructure, energy alternatives and green investment, especially after so many years of decay and neglect, it will also create domestic jobs, often good ones, all the while improving the nation's productivity.

As for the question of tolerating higher wages that may bring about a return of inflation, the higher wages themselves may stimulate growth by encouraging demand without, it is important to emphasize, pressuring financial markets with ever higher levels of debt. The demand in turn stimulates capital investment—the source of productivity growth—and may generate greater economies of scale. It is Henry Ford paying his workers up to $5 a day to make sure they could afford his cars.

The latter was always the American way. It is conclusively true, notes Peter Lindert, economist at the University of California, Davis, in a working paper for the centrist National Bureau of Economic Research, that America paid the highest wages in the world from 1800 to the 1980s. How did we grow so rapidly then?

If and when the ship is righted, including intelligent re-regulation of finance, the nation must again develop imaginative and aggressive policies to raise wages. How? Through institutional effort and a recognition that labor markets are hardly perfect. As economic historian Peter Temin and economist Frank Levy, both of MIT, argued in a recent paper, it is increasingly obvious that institutional protections for workers matter, and indeed worked in the 1950s and '60s to raise the standard of living for workers at all income levels.

Briefly, then, America must:

§ Raise the minimum wage still higher and on a regular basis. It has fallen far behind increases in inflation since the 1970s, and that affects higher level wages as well.

§ Encourage living-wage programs by local governments. Governments can demand that their contractors and suppliers pay well above the minimum wage. There is substantial evidence that this does not result in an undue loss of jobs.

§ Enforce the labor laws vigilantly. Minimum-wage and maximum-hour laws are violated to a stunning degree. American workers shouldn't be forced by their employers to understate the number of hours worked or be locked in the warehouse so they can't leave on time. Workers often make only $2 and $3 an hour.

§ Unions are not seeking a free pass to organize secretly when they advocate for open check-offs on cards to approve of a union vote. They are seeking to organize without persistent and often illegal management interference. Penalties for illegally deterring such organizing are so light, it makes little sense for management not to pursue strategies to stop organizing even at the cost of prosecution.

§ Request that trading partners develop serious environmental standards and worker-protection laws. This is good for them, bringing a progressive revolution and a robust domestic market to their countries. It is good for America, which will be able to compete on a more level playing field.

§ Demand that the president, governors and mayors speak up about unconscionable executive salaries and low wages. The influence from the top cannot be underestimated. A president who looks the other way sends a strong signal to business. A president who demands responsible treatment of workers will get a response. Business does not like such attention.

§ These measures should be accompanied by serious investment in modernized infrastructure and energy alternatives, which can create millions of domestic jobs that pay good salaries. It should also be accompanied by a policy that supports a lower dollar—contrary to Rubinomics—in order to stimulate manufacturing exports again. Accomplishing this may require a new system of semi-fixed currencies across the globe. The unabashed high-dollar policy of the past twenty years has led to imbalances around the world that have contributed fundamentally to US overindebtedness.

§ And finally, the nation needs more balance on the part of the Federal Reserve between subduing inflation and creating jobs. Americans can live with inflation above 2 percent a year.

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There is no academic evidence to support a 2 percent annual target, although the Fed has made this its informal target.

These are the components of a restored social contract that's suitable to America's aspirations and values and that promotes prosperity.

In addition, it can enable America to redress the gross neglect of its public assets. High on the list, alongside infrastructure and energy, should be universal pre-K schooling, more subsidies for college and the rethinking of the health-care system. Investment here can also create jobs traditionally held by women, who are neglected by policy initiatives. Health will rapidly become the largest budget issue of the nation in coming years unless it is addressed. I favor "Medicare for all," the highly efficient and well-liked insurance program for the nation's elderly. It can be implemented in a practical amount of time, it can be integrated with the private healthcare system and it enables government to negotiate fees and drug costs if it so chooses.

Higher budget deficits can be tolerated if the money is used for such public investment. But in Obama's third year, it may be time to raise taxes on all but poorer workers to pay for the half-trillion dollars or more of social spending we badly need. By then, the hope, by no means a fantasy, is that Obama may have proven to Americans that government can work. That, of course, is the key to success. To do so, however, will require shedding some of the ideological baggage of the Rubinomics holdovers he has advising him. ■

A Green Stimulus For the People

Obama's green agenda needs to empower working people to take control of their energy use.

by LISA MARGONELLI

By proposing a $100 billion "green stimulus" package to create jobs and cut carbon emissions, President-elect Obama has wisely decided not to let the economic crisis get in the way of addressing climate change. He may even see the crisis as a way of tackling climate change faster. In September his campaign's energy adviser, Jason Grumet, told a Harvard crowd that the conversation about climate change would be transformed when legislation addressing it is seen as "the next big American stimulus package."

That's good news. But so far Obama has stuck to the well-worn path of top-down subsidies for wind and solar energy, infrastructure investment and a modest revival of a home weatherization program for the poor. The problem with this plan is that it turns energy consumers as well as power producers into supplicants. Energy-industry subsidies are notoriously poor public investments—yielding few jobs or jobs of short duration because the government money can make the industry too dependent to be sustainable. Subsidies for specific technologies often benefit the well heeled—as with California's Million Solar Roofs initiative. Green is a luxury, out of reach for many Americans struggling with rising energy bills. Energy consumers get the message that they're victims of high prices rather than actors who could play a powerful role in moderating energy demand.

But with a bolder plan to make working families the agents of change, Obama can take a historic opportunity to remodel the way we generate, transmit and use energy, stimulating the economy in the short term and building a broad green constituency of workers and industry in the long term.

For a green stimulus plan to achieve its goals, Obama needs to popularize environmentalism and empower Americans to control their energy use. Instead of a million solar roofs and hundreds of thousands of pricey Priuses, we need 30 million well-insulated ceilings and 15 million Chevy Cobalts (or similar cars that get thirty mpg or more) for the majority of American households that make less than $60,000 a year. A populist energy-efficiency stimulus plan will create jobs as it reduces energy use and costs, eliminates emissions and puts families in charge of their energy consumption. The stimulus package also needs to address the inadequacies and inequities of our system of generating, transmitting and consuming electricity so that the greatest burden does not fall disproportionately on working families. An ambitious overhaul of America's power grid would have short-term stimulus benefits while kicking off a long period of technological and commercial innovation.

At the heart of this green stimulus opportunity is recognizing that rising energy prices have been particularly unfair to low- and moderate-income Americans, draining their finances and putting them at the mercy of fluctuating global energy markets. While the average family spent about 4 per-

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cent of its income on gasoline in 2006, those making $15,000 to $40,000 spent 9 percent, and by this past summer they were spending 10 to 14 percent of their income on gas. Better-off families were able to change jobs or houses or buy a more efficient car, but those with lower incomes had few options. In a cruel trick of the market, rising gas prices made the least efficient gas guzzlers the cheapest cars available. Chained to high energy expenditures, low-income families saw their credit and standard of living erode so that by last summer 70 percent of them told the National Energy Assistance Directors Association that rising energy prices had changed their food-buying habits. Many said they skipped payments on credit cards, utilities, mortgages and auto loans to pay for gas, which meant that rising energy costs had spilled over into already shaky mortgage and credit markets. In 2008 utilities cut off 8 percent of accounts for nonpayment.

What recourse do strapped households have? Since the 1970s Washington has offered partial help paying utility bills to very low-income families through the chronically underfunded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. However, neither direct payments nor proposals such as $1,000 stimulus checks or a gas tax holiday will reduce the underlying hemorrhage of fuel, money and greenhouse gas emissions from leaky homes. Crucially, direct payments perpetuate a cycle of dependence and wasted energy without giving households the power or access to capital to manage their energy use.

Helping poor and moderate-income families invest in energy efficiency will not only strengthen their finances; it will benefit the economy as a whole. The Energy Department estimates that 15 million homes owned by poorer Americans could be weatherproofed for less than $3,000 each, cutting their energy use by 20 percent—in effect creating an annually recurring stimulus payment of about $400. This weatherization opportunity should be extended to moderate-income families making up to $75,000 a year, allowing them to install energy-saving technologies like programmable thermostats and energy-efficient refrigerators. And weatherization creates jobs—fifty-two direct jobs and twenty-three indirect jobs for every $1 million invested, according to the Energy Department. Vouchers and low-interest loans to drive this investment would help correct working families' disproportionate share of the energy burden. Low-interest loans for energy efficiency—which have a history of reliably increasing homeowners' ability to make payments—should be part of the mortgage bailout plan as well.

Another way to make moderate-income families agents of change can be found in their cars. While the price of gas has fallen from its heights, wildly fluctuating energy prices are clearly part of the future. Giving low- and moderate-income households access to very low-interest loans for cars that get thirty mpg or more, sweetened with vouchers and incentives to scrap old gas guzzlers, would reduce the strain of commuting while cutting pollution and carbon emissions. Such subsidies should be a part of any bailout of the auto industry. They may seem extreme, but in the past they were made available to the well-off in the form of the $3,150 tax credit offered to Prius buyers.

While Obama's plan includes money for mass-transit projects, we might move more people to work by encouraging flexible transit—vanpools, paid carpool services or other programs to serve far-flung exurbs. Americans who take mass transit to work are outnumbered three to one by those who carpool, bike or walk. More may be persuaded to leave their cars at home if their schedules and routes are accommodated, and if they are rewarded with a green voucher. Businesses whose transit choices reduce traffic congestion and emissions would also benefit from reduced expenses, good PR and on-time employees. Wal-Mart, which has more than a million workers, might be enticed to provide vanpools for its employees, which would benefit workers, the company and the surrounding community.

America cannot limit carbon emissions without reinventing its electrical grid, and that's a chance to correct the basic unfairness of the system.

While insulation, compact cars and vanpools may not supply the sort of whiz-bang jobs associated with the fantasy of a green economy, they have the advantage of being quick to implement and relatively inexpensive.

In order to ensure the short- and long-term health of the economy and the environment, the government must renew the promise of the nation's electrical system. Dating back to the early twentieth century, our power system is increasingly unstable and unprepared to handle greater consumer demand or inputs of green power. The cost of power outages has risen to as much as $180 billion a year, while the energy wasted during transmission has doubled since the 1970s. Moreover, in a partially deregulated market, the price and quantity of electricity is kept hidden from consumers through an archaic purchasing system that gives them no control and leaves lower-income customers subsidizing high-quantity users. This antiquated grid and patchwork system of regulation means wasted power and money. Energy that could reduce our carbon footprint by a fifth is lost at industrial and farm sites around the country. America cannot limit carbon emissions without reinventing the grid, and that investment is also a chance to correct the basic unfairness of the system.

The first priority is to let people control how much power they buy, when and at what price by integrating every house into a "smart grid." Smart grids, which should really be called value grids, allow customers to see the price and origin of their electric power throughout the day and give them the means to reduce usage when rates are high. Pilot programs in Boulder, Colorado, and Washington's Olympic Peninsula have found that installing a $100 "smart meter" allows homeowners to save between 10 and 40 percent on electricity. Giving them the ability to reduce usage during peak periods also cuts down on power outages and can eliminate the need

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to build expensive "peak" power plants. A RAND study estimates that we could save as much as $130 billion by installing smart meters in all homes.

To understand the potential of the smart grid, we need to look at Franklin Roosevelt's waffle iron campaign. In the late 1920s, when he was governor of New York, Roosevelt led a drive for cheaper, nationalized power generation so every family could have appliances like waffle irons. Later he extended a version of this promise across the country with New Deal programs like the Tennessee Valley Authority and rural electrification drives. The dream of hot homemade waffles in the morning sounds quaint now. Didn't Roosevelt know about frozen toaster waffles? Of course not—the toasters, microwaves, home freezers and food chemistry that created ready-to-eat waffles spilled from that electrical plug installed in every home.

Similarly, installing smart meters could change the way households use electricity—enabling them to reduce waste and expect more of their appliances. Plug-in vehicles are already being tested for their ability to support a smart grid. Someday you may be able to charge your car with cheap, clean wind power at night, drive to work and lease your battery to your utility company while you're there. This innovation alone could dramatically reduce carbon emissions, create new ways to earn money and shake up the relationships among automakers, oil companies and utilities.

The smart grid isn't just for elites; it's a basic right. Everyone should be able to know the price of their electricity and control their use.

The key to making the smart grid happen is recognizing that it's not for "smart" people, green people or elites; it's a basic right. FDR's promise was that everyone, rich or poor, should have access to electricity. Obama can promise that everyone will be able to know the price—in dollars *and* carbon—of the electricity they use and to control their use for their benefit.

The second priority is broadening the definition of green power to include low-carbon power recycled from industry, farms and sewage—call it gray power. Like green power, energy from waste reduces emissions, but it also supports existing jobs in industrial zones and farm states. McKinsey Global Institute estimates that industry could make $50 billion a year in profits simply by turning lost heat, gases and pressure into electricity. A study by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory estimates that harvesting these profits could cut US greenhouse gas emissions by a fifth. Gray power creates jobs. It also protects existing jobs by shoring up the sagging balance sheets of older plants.

Power from manure and sewage is another opportunity that's ignored. In 2005 only about eighty farms captured bio-gas from their manure. The EPA estimates that 7,000 farms could turn their manure pools into fuel and money. This would prevent greenhouse gas emissions from the manure and reduce water pollution. Landfills and sewers offer further possibilities along the same lines.

Why aren't we recycling these energy sources already? Unlike solar, most of the technology is at least a generation old and relatively cheap. But onerous regulations, standby charges and discriminatory pricing keep some small-scale generators off the grid. A business culture that favors investing in energy production rather than energy efficiency, combined with subsidies for energy use, further prevents companies from exploiting opportunities within their own walls. Making national connection standards and regulations that favor distributed generation—green and gray—will encourage the rapid growth of renewable energy and an entrepreneurial power sector.

The final step in the stimulus plan should let the public do what utilities won't: build a national backbone grid to move power from one end of the country to the other. To extend the promise of steady, sustainable power to future generations, investing in a common carrier backbone is essential. A national grid will allow power to be wheeled between states, evening out prices and breaking down regional monopolies. If we're to integrate renewable power into the grid, it's a necessity. Established utilities invest very little capital in infrastructure; the project would make a great public investment. The payback for grid investments is $3 to $7 for every dollar invested, according to University of Minnesota professor Massoud Amin.

Building a national grid addresses another unseen problem: when the government enacts greenhouse gas legislation, the cost will not fall on everyone equally. Recent studies, including one from Oak Ridge National Laboratory, suggest that putting a price on carbon through a tax or cap-and-trade system will fall unfairly on poor, rural residents and people in the South and Midwest who depend on coal-fired power. Because the deregulation of the electrical industry occurred in a patchwork across the country—and only about a third of it is deregulated—the costs of a national greenhouse gas policy would vary widely depending on regulation in any given area. Building a national grid will enable a fairer greenhouse gas policy. Without these changes the burden of avoiding climate change will fall unfairly on some Americans through no fault of their own.

For Obama's economic stimulus and green agenda to succeed, energy must be democratized, conceived as a shared responsibility and right. This is not just a program of green jobs that can be plugged into the economy like kinetic Legos, or subsidies sprinkled from on high, but a full re-envisioning of energy and our relationship to it. Decades of cheap power have encouraged complacency, waste and squandered opportunities for innovation. (The electrical industry famously spends as much on research as the dog food industry.) Presented with this opportunity to let Americans take charge of their energy use, Obama must not fall back on the same old politics of power and subsidies. ■

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Dismantling the Imperial Presidency

It would be foolhardy simply to assume that Obama will sweep away Bush's worst excesses.

by AZIZ HUQ

President-elect Obama's first appointments to the Justice, State and Defense Departments mark no radical change. Rather, they return to a centrist consensus familiar from the Clinton years. But pragmatic incrementalism and studied bipartisanship will do little to undo the centerpiece of the Bush/Cheney era's legacy. At its heart, that regime was intent on forcing the Constitution into a new mold of executive dominance.

Obama enters the White House in a slipstream of forces that will hinder attempts to abandon this constitutional vision. He may be a careful constitutional scholar, but we can't rely on Obama alone to reorient the constitutional order. It will be up to progressives to insist on fundamental repudiation of the Bush/Cheney era.

At first blush, Obama's victory is cause for optimism. As a senator he roundly rejected the signature Bush/Cheney national security policies: torture, "extraordinary rendition," Guantánamo and—until July—warrantless surveillance. Obama appointees like Eric Holder as attorney general speak unequivocally against these violations of constitutional and human rights (to be sure, in Holder's case it was after early equivocation).

The most significant Bush/Cheney innovation was planted at the taproot of our Constitution. It was the insistence that the president can exercise what Cheney in 1987 called "monarchical notions of prerogative." That he can, in other words, override validly enacted statutes and treaties simply by invoking national security. This monarchical claim underwrote not only the expansion of torture, extraordinary rendition and warrantless surveillance but also the stonewalling of Congressional and judicial inquiries in the name of "executive privilege" and "state secrets."

The Bush/Cheney White House leveraged pervasive post-9/11 fears to reverse what Cheney called "the erosion of presidential power" since Watergate. Relying on pliant Justice Department lawyers for legal cover, it put into practice a vision of executive power unconstrained by Congress or the courts. It achieved what James Madison once called the "accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive and judiciary, in the same hands," which he condemned as "the very definition of tyranny."

Radical change is needed to re-establish legitimate bounds to executive power. We must again place beyond the pale Nixon's famous aphorism that "when the president does it, that means it's not illegal." But radical change—as early appointments and policy signals from the Obama transition team suggest—comes easier as campaign slogan than governing practice. And there are many reasons to fear a go-slow approach from Obama when it comes to restoring the constitutional equilibrium.

No matter how decent, any new president is tempted by the tools and trappings of executive authority. However tainted the Oval Office is now, Obama's perspective will change dramatically on entering the White House. He is already reading more daily security briefs than Bush and beginning each day with a barrage of fearful intelligence, hinting at dangers that largely never materialize. Submersion in that flow of intelligence will wrenchingly change his sense of the world's risks.

So Obama will be tempted to maintain Bush's innovations in executive power. While the terror threat remains substantial, as the Mumbai attack shows, the Bush administration has left counterterrorism policy in tatters. We have no rational strategy for terrorist interdiction and prevention. Obama's nominations of Robert Gates as defense secretary and Gen. James Jones as national security adviser suggest he is acutely aware of these deficits and of the Democrats' perceived vulnerability on national security. Nor are terrorists the only threat that might lead Obama to reach for emergency powers: credit crunches and fiscal meltdowns can also prompt unilateral executive action, with consequences as sweeping as any national security initiative.

Internal pressure for changing the White House position on executive power will thus wane as the new administration settles in. And pressure from the other two branches is unlikely to swell. The Obama White House will at first face a friendly Congress eager to show results on the economy and healthcare. Unlike the recently oppositional Congress, legislators in the majority have little incentive to make constitutional waves (expect some stalwarts, such as Senator Russ Feingold, to buck this trend). Matters are not helped by the turn from the feckless to the competent. Legislators and the public care most about the constitutional restraints on executive power when the occupant of the White House raises concerns about abuses of power. A more capable leader's entrance saps immediate pressure for reform, even when openings for such limits can be glimpsed.

Nor will the judiciary, listing rightward with President Bush's

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324 appointments, provide much constraint. In his appointments to the Supreme Court and the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals (which hears many key constitutional cases), Bush seems to have selected executive-power mavens, including Chief Justice John Roberts, Justice Samuel Alito and Judge Janice Rogers Brown. Their opinions already evince strong deference to executive claims of secrecy and expediency. Paradoxically, then, one of Bush's key legacies will be a judiciary that instinctually hews to an executive controlled by a Democratic president.

I am thus not optimistic that the Obama administration will of its own volition restore the constitutional balance, even if it gives up some of Bush/Cheney's most extravagant and offensive policies. With formidable forces arrayed against them, advocates for the Constitution's original equilibrium of powers must choose their battles carefully.

Three areas are particularly important in the administration's early days: torture, the law that the executive follows and accountability. In each case, measures can be taken that would correct a policy the Obama administration clearly disagrees with and simultaneously help dismantle the Bush/Cheney constitutional revolution. (The other pressing issue to face the incoming administration—detention policy—is so complex and difficult, largely thanks to the outgoing administration's compounded mistakes, that it needs to be looked at separately.)

Begin with torture. President Bush's repeated disavowals of government-sanctioned torture have created cognitive dissonance: White House protestations that "we don't torture" are no longer believed. An Obama administration dedicated to restoring America's tarnished international reputation must do more than talk. The best way to begin is for Congress to enact and President Obama to sign already introduced legislation that would limit the intelligence community to the specific interrogation tactics listed in the recently revised Army Field Manual. This law would make it clear that the CIA in particular cannot use what it euphemistically calls "enhanced interrogation techniques." In signing the law, Obama should eschew the weaseling signing provisos favored by Bush and instead forthrightly recognize that there is no presidential override when it comes to torture. This bill is a golden opportunity to restore international credibility *and* repudiate the monarchical presidency. So it is unfortunate that Democratic Senators Dianne Feinstein and Ron Wyden have already begun backsliding on it.

Also on the torture front, the Obama administration should candidly acknowledge past wrongs, thereby abandoning the Bush/Cheney demand for absolute secrecy. In legal cases filed by torture victims such as Maher Arar, Khaled el-Masri and Shafiq Rasul, the Bush administration has parried demands for acknowledgment or restitution with a sweeping constitutional theory of "state secrets." Rejecting this theory would be a significant step in dismantling the Bush/Cheney view of executive unilateralism. It would be the smallest measure of justice to abandon this theory as ill founded and also to offer profound apologies and restitution to victims. It would be a public acknowledgment that our fears are never an excuse for anyone's suffering.

Torture is only one aspect of a larger distortion of the Constitution. Changing the executive's operating definitions of the law will be critical to rolling back the Bush/Cheney vision. Now this vision is largely memorialized in Justice Department opinions, many still secret. Some of them directly address presidential prerogatives to override laws. Others deal with specific constitutional rights, such as Fourth Amendment privacy rights and the freedom from indefinite detention without trial.

While there is not much general public pressure to change these positions, many constitutional scholars and advocacy groups have protested these opinions. Consistent pressure is required to ensure that the Obama Justice Department cleans house. All department opinions on executive power should be revealed, and troubling ones should be red-flagged so officials will know they can no longer rely on them. The Justice Department should then develop opinions that systematically repudiate the most offensive positions, in particular the idea of monarchical prerogatives to override the law.

Traditionally, opinions have been prepared by the Office of Legal Counsel in secret and then closely held within the administration. Given executive-branch lawyers' habitual pro-presidential tilt, this process should be refashioned. Not only should opinions be made public after publication; the OLC should invite comment and criticism from the public and scholars during drafting, much as other federal regulations are subject to pre-publication "notice and comment."

Finally, there is the thorny matter of accountability. Absent accountability, the lesson of the Bush/Cheney era would be that those who violate the law can, if brazen enough, get away with it. Yet the Obama transition team has signaled no appetite for criminal proceedings. And in any case, indictments might be pre-empted by a blanket pardon before January 20.

Many others have made a compelling case for prosecutions. But what if they don't happen? Paradoxically, blanket presidential pardons may be the least bad alternative. If prosecutions proceed, they may not be edifying. Admissible evidence will be sparse, given secrecy rules. Officials will protest at being sandbagged after having relied on (flawed) OLC opinions. And there is the danger of a repeat of the Iran/Contra trials, where Oliver North used the dock as a soapbox. Given these risks, a blanket pardon perversely might send the clearest signal that the malaise of the Bush/Cheney era was endemic.

Yet this is no reason to renounce accountability. Several commentators have urged a commission to establish full documentation of what was done and its legal justifications. An investigative commission could be less amenable to manipulation than trials. If it could carry out its work in a bipartisan spirit, while insisting on the investigative tools needed to cut through secrecy, such as subpoena power, it could establish a definitive historical record of Bush/Cheney's extraordinary power grab. Bringing to public scrutiny the imperial presidency's infractions will, I suspect, be as good a way as any of thoroughly discrediting that constitutional vision.

No one should assume that the end of the Bush presidency marks the end of the imperial presidency. The Obama administration faces a geostrategic environment of growing uncertainty, with treasury, reputation and military depleted by eight feckless years. It would be foolhardy simply to assume that the worst will be swept away. Yet the opportunities exist for progressives to insist that Obama stay true to his message of hope and his promise of restoring America's tarnished Constitution. ■

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Iraq: The Necessary Withdrawal

The removal of US troops must be prompt, complete and coupled with smart diplomacy.

by JUAN COLE

The passage by the Iraqi Parliament in late November of the US-Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) adds credibility and urgency to President-elect Obama's pledge to get US troops out of Iraq by the midpoint of his first term. Bush's costly and illegal war has been a drain on the economy to the tune of a trillion dollars if hidden costs are included, a sum likely to triple in coming decades as the public pays for the care of injured veterans. The war has left tens of thousands of military personnel wounded, suffering from brain trauma or dead. The toll on Iraqis has been monumental. It cannot end too soon.

The general Iraqi hostility to the presence of foreign troops was apparent in the process whereby the SOFA was enacted. The fierce debates that it provoked signaled that there are only two major factions in Iraqi politics: those who want the United States out within a couple of years and those who want the United States out now.

The Washington debate on withdrawal, in contrast, has been peculiarly removed from reality since the early days of the presidential campaign. Such opponents of withdrawal as John McCain called it an act of "surrender," a waving of a white flag. (To whom would we have been surrendering?) The US military would have to stay in Iraq forever, they implied, because it would be too embarrassing to leave. They demanded "victory" but carefully avoided defining what they meant by the word. They warned that parts of Iraq, or even the entire country, would become an Al Qaeda base were the United States to depart. Even as they spoke, Shiite militias were systematically cleansing about half the Sunni Arab population from the capital and a Shiite prime minister was gathering military power into his hands. The Republican visions of Osama bin Laden occupying Saddam's palaces were paranoid fantasies.

The Bush administration initially pressed on Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki a SOFA text that all but formally reduced Iraq to a colony. The United States would control Iraq's air and water, would arrest and detain Iraqis at will and without the requirement of due process, would decide unilaterally what was a terrorist threat within the country and how to deal with it, and would initiate military action unilaterally. Its troops and private security contractors would enjoy complete immunity from Iraqi law. There was no timetable for US withdrawal. A year or two earlier, an Iraqi government might have had to just go along with it.

Maliki had long argued that he would not need US troops past 2009. Only in March and April 2008 did he prove, however, that he had won control of the increasingly well-trained and professional Iraqi military in ways that might allow him greater independence from the United States. Despite American advice to the contrary, he moved militarily against his main internal rival, the Shiite Mahdi Army, in Basra, Amara and Sadr City last spring. With that success under his belt, the prime minister had gained the confidence to push back against the Bush/Cheney imperium.

Despite his new role as commander in chief of a more confident Iraqi military, Maliki needs the support of other Shiite notables and parties to remain in power. His Islamic Dawa Party is relatively small. He depends on the support of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the spiritual leader of Iraq's Shiites, who strongly opposed any SOFA that infringed on Iraq's sovereignty. Maliki is also increasingly closely allied with the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, the leading Shiite party in the Iraqi Parliament, which has close links to Iran. Both ISCI and its patrons in Tehran wanted to see a timetable established for US troop withdrawals from Iraq. Not only is Iran threatened by the massive US troop presence on its borders but the occupation of Muslim countries by a non-Muslim military is anathema to the Islamic Republic. One of the grievances Ayatollah Khomeini had voiced as he made the Islamic Revolution in Iran in the 1970s was that US troops based in Iran enjoyed immunity from Iranian law.

In the end, by dint of hard bargaining and brinkmanship, Maliki secured a very different sort of agreement from the lame-duck Bush. As of January 1, the US military will have to get permission from Iraqi authorities for military operations. Off-duty, off-base US troops who commit crimes might theoretically be liable to prosecution before an Iraqi judge. Civilian security contractors will be under Iraqi law. US combat troops will withdraw from all Iraqi cities to bases by the end of June, ending their unilateral neighborhood patrols. By 2011 they will be out of the country altogether, and the Iraqi government can advance the deadline by a simple request. Some US commanders may engage in foot-dragging in meeting these deadlines, setting the stage for conflicts between Washington and Baghdad. But with Obama and Maliki committed to the withdrawal of US combat troops, it is clear

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that Bush's hopes for long-term bases have been dashed.

Perhaps never before in history has an invader that won a crushing military victory, and that continued to occupy its prize, voluntarily accepted such humiliating terms from the vanquished. It is difficult to discern how Bush's agreement differs from the "surrender" Democrats were accused of advocating when they put forward a similar timetable for complete withdrawal.

Even with all these concessions, the agreement only got 54 percent of Parliament's 275 potential votes, barely an absolute majority, precisely because so many Iraqi political forces found the idea of formally authorizing the further presence of US soldiers on Iraqi soil so distasteful. Powerful Shiite fundamentalist parties such as the Sadr movement and the Fadhila (Virtue) Party rejected it altogether, and the latter boycotted the vote. The Sunni Arab representatives held their noses while mostly voting for it but required that a national referendum be held on the pact. (It is scheduled for July and is not assured of passage.) In the aftermath of negotiations, the Shiite clerical establishment expressed concerns that the agreement infringed too much on Iraq's sovereignty.

Even though the SOFA allows for an extension of the 2011 deadline by mutual consent, the Obama administration would be unwise to keep US troops in Iraq beyond it. As the drawdown proceeds, the smaller numbers left behind will become increasingly vulnerable to attack, and a plurality of Iraqis clearly still means them harm. Sistani is increasingly impatient with the foreign occupation, and an explicit *fatwa*, or legal ruling, from him forbidding the continued presence of US soldiers could set 15 million Iraqi Shiites virulently against those remaining.

There are powerful reasons for which the United States should mount an orderly withdrawal from Iraq. The first and most important is that the Iraqis want it. In an opinion poll of 2,228 randomly selected Iraqis done last February for the BBC and other clients by D3 Systems and KA Research, 72 percent somewhat or strongly opposed the continued presence of foreign troops in the country, and nearly 40 percent wanted US troops out immediately. The proportion of the public that believed attacks on coalition forces are acceptable stood at 42 percent last winter.

The US occupation of Iraq has profoundly harmed its image in the Muslim world, and the only hope of mending relations with Arab peoples in particular is for a complete US withdrawal. Public opinion matters because an angry populace becomes a recruitment pool for violent groups. Iraq-inspired terrorism has hit Madrid, London, Amman, Jeddah and Glasgow, among other cities. Bush's crusade, far from making the NATO countries and their allies safer, has turned them into serial targets of angry young men who view the West as genocidal toward Sunni Muslims.

The potential benefits of a withdrawal outweigh the risks. Maliki had earlier been unwilling to come to terms with the Sunni Arabs, knowing that he could always call down US bombs on them if they defied him. With the prospect of a less robust US role looming, the prime minister has suddenly discovered the art of compromise. He acquiesced in the popular referendum on the SOFA demanded by Sunni parties because he needed the vote for it to express a cross-sectarian national consensus.

Likewise, the Sunni Arab "Awakening Councils," local militias fostered by the American military, had often expressed a profound hostility toward the Maliki government, pledging to take it on after they had finished off "Al Qaeda in Iraq," the radical fundamentalists who seldom actually called themselves that and against whom the Awakening Councils had turned. This fall, as part of the preparations for a reduced US role, the Maliki government took over the responsibility of paying the salaries of around 50,000 Awakening Council fighters in Baghdad, tying their fate to that of the prime minister. Maliki wants to decommission most of them, a move they are resisting. The relationship is not solely negative, however. Maliki at one point attempted to bring some of their representatives into his cabinet, and they are likely to have a place in provincial administration after the upcoming provincial elections.

Iraq has been embroiled in at least four low-intensity civil conflicts in recent years. In the south, the Shiite militias and the new Iraqi security forces have been jockeying for power. Following Maliki's Basra and Amara campaigns, the Iraqi military has emerged on top and has forced the militias to stand down, at least for now. In the center of the country, the Sunni Arab population fought the US military presence (with the Awakening Councils' defeat of the radical fundamentalists in Anbar province and Baghdad, that war has wound down). The Sunni Arab resistance groups have also been fighting the Shiite-dominated Iraqi state. They have, however, lost Baghdad, and those in Anbar seem resigned to the new situation. Resistance continues in the ethnically mixed Diyala, Salahuddin and Nineveh provinces. Finally, behind the scenes there has been Arab-on-Kurd violence in the north, as the two ethnic communities struggle for control of cities like Khanaqin and Kirkuk.

It should be noted that Baghdad was ethnically cleansed of nearly a million Sunni Arabs in 2006–07 under the nose of US troops while the troop escalation, or "surge," was being implemented. Shiite militiamen invaded neighborhoods at night or sent threatening letters to Sunni heads of households, or killed one member of a clan as a warning to the others. American soldiers were helpless to intervene. This sort of micro-level political and demographic struggle is likely to continue for some time in Iraq, but it will unfold whether US troops are there or not.

The two big remaining security problems—continued Sunni Arab resistance to the new order in Diyala, Salahuddin and Nineveh provinces, and the Kurdish-Arab wrangling over Kirkuk and other disputed territories—can only be resolved politically, not by military force. The struggles in Iraq, like those in Lebanon since 1975, are kaleidoscopic, characterized by shifting alliances and serial feuds. The main supporters of the US presence in northern Iraq are the Kurds. If US troops come into ever greater conflict with Maliki, could they really afford to fight their best ally, the Kurdish paramilitary *peshmerga*? Yet how could they decline to support the elected prime minister? There is also the danger of Turkey, Washington's NATO ally, being drawn into a Kurdish-Arab struggle on Baghdad's side. US troops would be in an impossible situation if they were expected to intervene militarily in such a complex struggle.

Obama could help make sure that the troop withdrawal goes smoothly by engaging in the sort of hands-on, intelligent

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and far-seeing diplomacy the previous administration was either uninterested in or incapable of. He should seek a concrete plan for the disposition of Kirkuk before the United States loses all leverage in Iraq. It might be possible, for instance, to partition the province so that the Kurdish population can join the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Turkmen and Arabs can have their own province and remain in Iraq proper. The city of Kirkuk could also be partitioned or could have a dual role. The city of Chandigargh in India is the capital of both Punjab and Haryana provinces, after all. The oil wealth of Kirkuk is already divided between the federal government and the KRG by a formula that gives 17 percent to Kurdistan. A territorial compromise can also be reached, but high-level and tough diplomacy will be required.

The other historic compromise that still needs to be made is between the Shiite-dominated government and the Sunni Arabs. Al Qaeda in Iraq are a rapidly diminishing factor; not only would the Iraqi Shiites and Kurds not put up with them but the Iraqi Sunni Arabs have largely rejected them. The idea that Al Qaeda in Iraq could hope to hold significant territory or use it as a base for external attacks is a fantasy. Nor would Shiite Iran, secular Turkey or monarchical Jordan stand for it. The Iraqi Sunnis are largely Iraqi or Arab nationalists who mainly want to avoid being marginalized and impoverished in the new Iraq. President Obama, in conjunction with Iraq's neighbors, should continue to work with the Iraqi government to find practical means of national reconciliation.

The United States invaded a country that had not attacked it, dissolved its army and much of its government, threw it into chaos, and set in train events that probably have led to the deaths of as many as a million Iraqis and have left more than 4 million displaced. It is a burned-out hulk of a country, full of widows and orphans, of the unemployed and the marginalized, still infested with militias and suffering daily bombings and assassinations. The United States kicked off an ethno-religious free-for-all that could still tear the country apart.

Obama bears no responsibility for these policies, but as president he inherits the responsibility to do everything he can to allow Iraq to go forward without further calamities and to repair, through reparations or aid, as much of the damage as possible. The key question is whether the Obama administration will have the wisdom and concentration to broker overarching deals in Iraq proactively as it prepares to depart that country, rather than being purely reactive. ■

A Last Chance at Middle East Peace?

The two-state solution for Israel-Palestine will disappear for good if Obama doesn't move fast.

by HENRY SIEGMAN

President-elect Obama will be the last American president who has a chance to save the two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. If he does not achieve this goal during the first year of his presidency, the two-state "horizon" that George W. Bush pursued so ineptly is likely to disappear for good. But even a quick engagement by the new president will fare no better than previous US peace initiatives—all of which have gotten nowhere—if Obama and his advisers approach the task believing that some more "peace processing" or "confidence-building measures" will achieve the goal.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has defied US "facilitation" over these many years not because of procedural shortcomings or a paucity of ideas. The terms of a workable agreement—formulated in the so-called Clinton Parameters of December 2000 and elaborated in the Taba discussions that followed in January 2001—are well known and enjoy near-universal support. They call for minor rectifications in the 1949 armistice line (which served as Israel's pre-1967 border) in order to allow Israel to retain a cluster of nearby settlements based on an agreed equal exchange of territory on both sides of the border; a capital for the new Palestinian state in Arab East Jerusalem; a limited return of Palestinian refugees to their former homes in Israel in agreed numbers that do not significantly alter Israel's ethnic and religious balance; a nonmilitarized Palestinian state that addresses Israeli security concerns while respecting Palestinian sovereignty; and a US-led international force that would ensure security and assist with Palestinian nation-building for a transitional period.

What has been missing is the political will to get the parties to act on these parameters—a political and moral failure that has doomed all previous efforts. This failure has not been the result of ignorance but of cowardice—a willful disregard by Israel and successive American administrations, as well as by

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much of the international community, of certain unchanging fundamentals that underlie this conflict. Peace initiatives that ignore these fundamentals and seek an agreement on the cheap cannot succeed.

None of what follows is intended to excuse disastrous choices Palestinians have so often made in pursuing their struggle for statehood—from egregious failures at institution-building, to murderous violence against innocent civilians, to the more recent fratricidal warfare between Fatah and Hamas (for which Fatah's refusal to accept the democratic choice of the Palestinian people in the parliamentary elections of 2006, and US instigation of that refusal, deserve most of the blame). Rather, it is to say that the difficult measures Palestinians must take to put their house in order will remain beyond their grasp unless they are given a credible Israeli commitment to a state alongside Israel that is "independent, viable and sovereign" by right, not as a result of Israeli generosity. And because such a state is indeed the right of the Palestinian people, its acknowledgment must precede—not follow—conditions set for its implementation.

That such a clear commitment has not been made to this day is far more revealing of Israeli intentions and US/European indifference than any number of confidence-building measures that have left entirely unchanged the Palestinians' status as a people under the heel of a crushing and open-ended occupation. Any credibility that President Bush's call in 2002 for a Palestinian state might have had was dissipated by his letter to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2004, in which he called for Israel's retention of "already existing major Israeli population centers" in the West Bank.

In a recent interview following his resignation as prime minister, Ehud Olmert, a longtime right-wing Likud hawk who for many years supported Israel's retention of "Greater Israel" and opposed the peace treaty with Egypt, shocked Israelis by endorsing views held by Israel's hard left. Among other startling declarations (such as his newly held belief that Israel will have no peace if it does not return "all, or nearly all," of the occupied territories or if it refuses to permit the establishment of the capital of the Palestinian state in East Jerusalem), Olmert said the reason Israel was able to reach a peace agreement with Egypt—as opposed to its failure to achieve an accord with Yasir Arafat or with Syria's two Assads—was not Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem, as widely believed. The real reason is that well before Sadat's visit, Israel's celebrated chief of staff and defense minister, Moshe Dayan, at a secret meeting with Sadat's envoy in Morocco, delivered the following two messages from Prime Minister Menachem Begin: "First, Israel is prepared to return every last inch of Egyptian territory under Israeli occupation. Second, we are ready to negotiate the implementation of that goal." That, Olmert said, is something Israel has refused to say to the Palestinians, and that is why all previous negotiations have gotten nowhere.

By contrast, when asked in 1968 to describe his plan for the future of the occupied territories, Dayan replied, "The plan is being implemented in actual fact. What exists today must remain as a permanent arrangement in the West Bank." A decade later, at a conference in Tel Aviv, when asked what was the solution to the occupation, he responded, "The question is not 'What is the solution?' but 'How do we live without a solution?'" As noted by Geoffrey Aronson of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, who has monitored the settlement enterprise from its beginnings, "Living without a solution, then as now, was understood by Israel as the key to maximizing the benefits of conquest while minimizing the burdens and dangers of retreat or formal annexation."

> 'Living without a solution…was understood by Israel as the key to maximizing the benefits of conquest.' —Geoffrey Aronson, FMEP

Of course, while in office, Olmert did nothing consistent with his newly found convictions. To the contrary, until the last moment he personally approved measures, such as authorizing further construction in the settlements and East Jerusalem, that deepened the despair of Palestinians and made a two-state solution an even more impossible fantasy.

So back to the fundamentals. The first and most decisive one is the vast discrepancy of power and influence that defines the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. It is rare for a country with the overwhelming military, diplomatic and economic advantages enjoyed by Israel to yield to demands of a near-impotent adversary without a powerful third party restoring some balance between the two. In this situation the only outside power capable of restoring that balance is the United States, because its support is unquestioned by Israelis and understood by everyone to be the country's most important security asset—one they dare not compromise.

The four-decade colonial dynamic of the settlement enterprise has resulted in so extensive an expansion of Israel's population into Palestinian territories as to make a Palestinian state impossible. And that, indeed, was its purpose. What is not clear is whether these "facts on the ground" established unilaterally by Israel are still reversible. Their reversibility depends entirely on whether President Obama is prepared to draw on the large political capital the United States has accumulated these past sixty years with its unstinting support of Israel to leave no doubt about his resolve to end the conflict on the basis of the existing international consensus, while at the same time fully supporting—and participating in—the measures that will be necessary to enable Israel to deal with security challenges created by such an accord. However complicated and costly, these measures hold far greater promise of protecting Israel's security within its borders—and at lesser material and moral cost—than the perpetuation of the occupation.

American peace processors in previous administrations have repeatedly warned that an agreement imposed on the parties by outside powers would quickly fall apart. They are wrong, for the permanent-status parameters that President Obama and the international community would be advocating are based entirely on principles that both Israel and the Palestinians signed on

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to when they formally endorsed UN Resolutions 242 and 338, the 1993 Oslo Accords, the 2003 "road map" and the 2007 Annapolis understandings. The United States and the international community would be demanding—after forty years of Israeli and Palestinian noncompliance—only that these commitments finally be implemented.

To be effective, such a new American initiative must be based on a clear reaffirmation of the foundational principle of the road map and other previous agreements. These agreements specify that while changes in the pre-1967 situation, territorial or otherwise, may be inevitable, they will not receive US support or recognition if made unilaterally by either party. It is a principle that Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice repeatedly affirmed rhetorically but never acted upon.

Particularly misguided and damaging has been the oft-repeated demand that Palestinians offer territorial concessions that match the "painful concessions" Israel's leaders have said they are prepared to make. It is a formulation that reveals a profound misunderstanding or deliberate distortion of the history of this conflict, one that will inevitably produce a one-sided outcome that is unjust and untenable. Palestinians have not asked Israel to make territorial concessions—i.e., give up any of the territory Israel controlled between the armistice agreement of 1949 and the 1967 war—nor has Israel ever indicated it would under any circumstances consider doing so. What Palestinians have asked is that Israel return Palestinian territory on which Israel has illegally established settlements and to which it has transferred its own population, in violation of treaty obligations and international law. To describe the return of illegally expropriated Palestinian territory as Israeli "concessions" is to compromise the Palestinian case before negotiations even begin.

Indeed, it is only Palestinians who have made painful concessions. As a condition for Israel's acceptance of the Oslo Accords, the PLO formally agreed to recognize the legitimacy of territory acquired by Israel in the war of 1948. It is a concession that reduced by fully one half the territory originally assigned to the Arab population of Palestine by the UN partition plan of 1947. Given that major Palestinian territorial concession, any new initiative that does not provide that negotiations begin at the pre-1967 armistice line and expects Palestinians to relinquish (other than in equal land swaps) even more of the 22 percent of the territory that has been left them will be stillborn.

The United States and the international community must reject the unspoken but long-dominant notion that if the parties do not reach a peace accord, the "default setting" of UN Resolutions 242 and 338 is a continuation of Israel's occupation. If that notion were correct, its authors would have deliberately subverted the resolution's goal by presenting Israel with an irresistible incentive to avoid a peace agreement indefinitely. The United States and the international community must therefore finally act on the resolutions' plain logic that their default setting is a return to the status quo ante—without territorial and other changes that negotiations and a peace agreement might have produced. It is a default setting that should have kicked in long ago.

Finally, while the cessation of violence is a necessary condition for successful peace negotiations, it is an unimplementable goal absent an independent and empowered international mechanism that monitors violations by both sides. If the occupying power—with its guns trained on the occupied population—continues to serve as judge, jury and executioner, as it has for the past forty years, violence is inevitable and peacemaking will remain out of reach.

It is these fundamentals that must inform what will surely be the last US opportunity to salvage a two-state solution. Losing this opportunity will spell the end of Israel as a democratic or Jewish state; given the emerging non-Jewish majority in the territories under Israel's control, it can no longer be both. It is difficult to understand why anyone would believe that supporting or acquiescing in that kind of outcome is an act of friendship to the State of Israel or the Jewish people.

The loss of the two-state solution would also severely damage important US national interests. Across the Arab and Muslim world, America's perceived partiality toward Israel and indifference to Palestinian rights and suffering continue to fuel virulent anti-American sentiment. James Baker and Lee Hamilton, co-chairs of the 2006 Iraq Study Group, warned that US success in Iraq depends in part on progress in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iran, which exploits the Palestinian plight for political gain, would welcome a failure to end the conflict to consolidate its strategic gains. Hezbollah would exploit it to justify its continued use of an independent paramilitary force in Lebanon. And failure would intensify grievances that would continue to generate sympathy and support for Al Qaeda and attract new recruits to its ranks. As far as Al Qaeda is concerned, the loss of the two-state solution would be the ultimate gift that keeps on giving.

> If the occupying power continues to serve as judge, jury and executioner, violence is inevitable and peacemaking will remain out of reach.

The lesson the new administration should draw from previous failures is that peacemaking gets nowhere if it focuses on process, confidence-building and incrementalism in the absence of clear parameters that define the endgame. It is a strategy born of a lack of courage to tell Israel that its exploitation of the absence of a peace agreement to continue its confiscation of Palestinian land will no longer be tolerated by the international community.

A US initiative that goes beyond the failed "facilitation" of previous administrations to vigorous and determined diplomacy can still produce a two-state solution, but only an American president whose political and moral horizon extends beyond the next Congressional elections—and who understands that by the time those elections occur the two-state solution will have disappeared—can hope to bring this multigenerational tragedy to an end.

It remains to be seen if Barack Obama is that man. ■

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For a New US Policy Toward Russia

Washington simply cannot afford confrontation, given the challenges we face elsewhere.

by ANATOL LIEVEN

One of the incoming Obama administration's top foreign policy priorities should be to stop the drift toward confrontation with Russia. The war in Georgia last summer demonstrated the dangers of an American policy that encourages Russia's neighbors to attack what Russia sees as its vital interests. The United States, by contrast, has no vital interests in this region—certainly not compared with those elsewhere. The Georgian attack on South Ossetia and President Mikheil Saakashvili's increasing authoritarianism should also make clear that the United States has no moral stake in the Russia-Georgia dispute. In any other context, Washington would have not the slightest difficulty in denouncing the Saakashvili administration as chauvinist, bellicose aggressors against the Abkhaz and Ossetian peoples.

Above all, however, Washington simply cannot afford the geopolitical distraction of confrontation with Russia when the United States faces such immense challenges elsewhere. What is more, Russia can be of great help on what should be two linked priorities of the new administration: achieving détente with Iran and putting together a regional coalition to help stabilize Afghanistan and eventually replace the US and NATO presence there. Russian pressure and Russian contacts in Tehran would be immensely valuable in this regard. These are urgent issues; defending Europe against possible Iranian nuclear weapons at some indefinite time in the future is not necessary today and probably never will be. Plans to deploy missile defenses in Central Europe should therefore immediately be put on hold, as part of a wider strategy outlined below.

In its approach to Russia the new administration has one great advantage, denied to it in other spheres: in order to achieve a significant improvement in relations, Washington does not actually have to do anything. It only has to stop doing certain things. This is because, contrary to the impression assiduously cultivated in the US media and think-tank worlds, Russian policy vis-à-vis the West is not more aggressive or assertive than it was in the past. Outside the economic sphere, it is rather overwhelmingly reactive, made up of responses (which may, of course, be exaggerated or unwise) to the actions of the West and especially the United States.

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The difference between the image of Russian behavior in the United States and its reality was dramatized by the war over South Ossetia in August. It is not just that a clear and obvious Georgian attack was misreported as an act of Russian aggression by the US media and establishment. It is also that the whole affair was presented in terms of a new Russian expansionism. As a matter of record, however, Moscow's commitment to defend South Ossetia dates back to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990, and that of defending Abkhazia, to Boris Yeltsin in 1993. Rightly or wrongly, Soviet and then Russian help was instrumental in defeating Georgian attempts to crush these regions' independence moves in the early '90s.

Thereafter, Moscow repeatedly made clear that it would not accept any Georgian attempt to retake these territories by force. In recent years Moscow's signals in this regard to the Saakashvili government could not have been clearer. One can criticize this Russian policy from a number of points of view; but one cannot seriously claim that it was either new or hidden.

The new element in the region has been the US arming of Georgia and the US push to bring Georgia into NATO. It can only have been belief in US support that inspired Saakashvili to launch Georgia's attack. If Washington had not created the impression that such support would be forthcoming in the event of war, there would have been no war, and the United States would have avoided a crisis that the world economy could ill afford, including $4.5 billion in emergency Western aid to Georgia, money that could have been better spent in helping Pakistan, for example—a country that truly is vital to US interests.

Moscow is not aiming at domination of Georgia proper. After all, in recent years Russia has withdrawn its bases, allowed the peaceful displacement of President Eduard Shevardnadze by Saakashvili and acquiesced in Saakashvili's forcible overthrow of the rival regime of Aslan Abashidze in the Georgian autonomous republic of Ajaria and in the virtual abolition of that region's autonomy—despite the fact that at the time, Russian troops were still based in Ajaria and could have intervened to prevent it.

Moscow has long since recognized that Georgian nationalism makes a subservient Georgia impossible. On the other hand, the Russian establishment is absolutely determined to defend the protectorates of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and to prevent NATO from helping Georgia to reconquer them. It sees in this an exact parallel with the West's policy of defending Kosovo against Serbia.

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In other words, the US depiction of the situation in the Caucasus is an inversion of the truth. Far from protecting Georgia from Russia, US policy has encouraged Georgia to attack Russia and thereby endanger and destabilize itself. And whether Georgia is inside or outside NATO, there is no chance that the United States will send forces to fight for Georgia, if only because it does not have any available.

American reporting about Ukraine has been just as misleading. The push for NATO membership has been presented as a move to boost Ukrainian democracy and enhance Ukrainian security. But NATO membership would almost certainly have exactly the opposite effect, for the simple reason that according to every opinion poll, it is opposed by a large majority of Ukrainians in general and by an overwhelming majority in the Russian-speaking east and south of the country. Even leaving aside the issue of Russia's reaction, the NATO issue bitterly divides Ukraine and raises the possibility of internal differences worsening to the point of civil war. Russia would doubtless encourage this process, but it is the United States, not Russia, that would initiate it.

The first step in relations with Russia on the part of the new administration should therefore be quietly to move the offer of NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine onto the back burner. Condoleezza Rice has already opened the way for this by stating that the United States will not press for an early offer of a "membership action plan" at the next NATO summit. As one of its first actions in the area of foreign policy, the Obama administration should give private assurances to Russia that the issue will not be raised again as long as Obama remains in power—unless, of course, Russia takes aggressive and unprovoked actions against Ukraine, Georgia or the Baltic states. Russian officials have repeatedly made clear in private that the abandonment of US offers of membership to Ukraine and Georgia would automatically unlock much greater Russian cooperation on a range of other issues. Given the congruence of wider US and Russian interests—and the Russian government's need for Western investment and goodwill in the face of its own growing economic crisis—a considerable warming in relations should be possible.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, the Obama administration should aim at a clear, if doubtless private, agreement that would exclude radical action by either the United States or Russia in favor of a joint commitment to share influence. Thus the United States would abandon further moves to pull Ukraine into NATO in return for a Russian disavowal of crude forms of political intervention and economic pressure. Such an agreement should be eased by the fall in the international price of energy, greatly reducing—for a time at least—Moscow's ability to use its energy supplies as a weapon of geopolitical influence.

It should also be made clear to Moscow that if it ever uses energy blackmail against existing members of NATO and the EU, then all other agreements will automatically be under question. To be fair, despite hysterical Western fears, Moscow has never done this or threatened it as far as its Western customers are concerned—though it has cut supplies to Ukraine and Georgia because of massive unpaid bills. However, fears that Russia will put energy pressure on the West in the future should be used by the Obama administration to accelerate radically increased US cooperation with Europe to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

The Obama administration needs to embed its relations with Russia in a wider new strategy toward Eurasia. The frame should include Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, and the approach should be based on a recognition that the United States is simply not strong enough anymore—if indeed it ever was—to impose its will on the region, or even to prevent Afghanistan from sinking into deeper civil war.

First, the Obama administration needs to make a determined effort at reconciliation with Iran, starting with private signals to the Iranian establishment that the defeat of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran's presidential elections in June 2009 would be a major step in making this possible, coupled with assurances that the United States has no intention of backing regime change. The new approach should include a return to the terms of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty under strict supervision, thereby verifiably freezing the Iranian nuclear program short of weaponization. Russia and China should be enlisted to bring this about, and to agree to impose very tough international sanctions if Iran breaks the treaty. On the other hand, Iran should immediately be promised the restoration of full diplomatic relations and the unlocking of frozen assets in return for a treaty promising strict adherence to the NPT and help to the United States in Afghanistan.

The United States must improve relations with Russia if it is to achieve the regional consensus needed to solve the crisis in Afghanistan.

A declared pursuit of détente with Iran would, in turn, enable the Obama administration to suspend another major cause of Russian hostility, namely the move to establish US missile defenses in Central Europe. Washington can announce that as long as there is a good chance of preventing an Iranian nuclear force by diplomatic means, there is obviously no need for those missile defenses. The whole issue can therefore be deferred—let us hope indefinitely.

Improved relations with Iran and Russia should be used to help with what will be a central challenge for the Obama administration: stabilizing Afghanistan without committing US troops to fight there for decades or launching an invasion of Pakistan to destroy Taliban support, thereby creating a much greater disaster for US and world security. The answer to this dilemma—a most imperfect answer, but the best on offer—is to try to stitch together a regional consensus to manage Afghanistan after the United States and NATO withdraw.

Russia and Iran are both critical to such a strategy. Before 9/11 these countries were instrumental in preserving whatever remained of anti-Taliban opposition within Afghanistan. Without them, the United States would have had no local

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allies on the ground when it attacked the Taliban regime in the fall of 2001. In addition, Iran, as Afghanistan's most important neighbor, will always be critical to any serious attempt to develop Afghanistan's economy—something that has been barely mentioned in the Western debate over that war-torn nation.

Russia could also play a valuable role in Afghanistan's future because it can act as a bridge between two other countries that will be vital in this regard: China and India. China, in turn, is of great importance because of its close links to Pakistan, which is the only external power to possess any significant degree of influence over the Taliban. If the United States can work with Russia and Iran to help bring together Afghanistan's other neighbors, that will increase the chances that the United States will be able to leave Afghanistan with some measure of dignity intact and without simply allowing Afghanistan to sink back into the horrible anarchy of the pre-Taliban 1990s.

If the Obama administration pursues the set of policies described above, it will have to imagine the United States not as "the country which stands taller than other nations, and therefore sees further," in Madeleine Albright's words but as a state among other states: not with a unique mission of national superiority and leadership but with a common responsibility to seek common solutions to common problems. Unfortunately, such a truly multilateral foreign policy is alien to the Clinton/Albright school of diplomacy—from which Obama has drafted many of his top advisers. Hillary Clinton, Obama's nominee as secretary of state, as well as her and Obama's key associates in the area of Russia policy, have an especially bad record when it comes to Russian relations. Some, like Stephen Sestanovich, Strobe Talbott and Michael McFaul, have contributed directly to a worsening of relations, for example by their guidance in drafting the misguided 2006 bipartisan Council on Foreign Relations report *Russia's Wrong Direction*.

On the other hand, two factors contribute to greater optimism regarding future US-Russian relations. The first is that in many ways, for the United States to adopt a more sensible policy toward Russia and other major powers, it really only has to follow the fairly rational model already pursued by both the Clinton and second Bush administrations in their relations with China. Both administrations did this in the end because they recognized that the United States was not powerful enough to do anything else, at least without bringing the world economies down in ruins. Echoing this, the growing constraints on US power analyzed in the latest report of the National Intelligence Council should lead to greater sobriety across the entire spectrum of foreign policy. Therefore, even if the new administration proves incapable of greater wisdom in its dealings with Russia, it may at least be forced to exercise greater caution.

The assumptions of the Clinton and Bush administrations concerning US power and the ideological certainties on which they founded much of their foreign policy lie in ruins. Faced with the collapse of past Communist certainties, the Chinese and Russian elites eventually responded with radically new strategies. I would be disappointed to find out that US Democratic Party elites are inferior in this regard. ■

Redoing Globalization

The economic crisis is caused by world trade imbalances just as much as domestic problems.

by SHERLE R. SCHWENNINGER

The great financial bubble of the Clinton-Bush years has ended in tears—in home foreclosures, bank failures and what promises to be the most severe global economic recession since the Great Depression. As President-elect Obama puts together his economic recovery program, he needs to understand that the economic crisis is the result not just of unscrupulous mortgage lenders and unregulated investment bankers on Wall Street but of the globalization of finance and trade that key members of his economic team set in motion when they were in the Clinton administration. The uncomfortable truth is that the current system of global commerce and transnational finance is inherently prone to crisis and is incompatible with Obama's goal of rebuilding the American middle class. Any sustainable recovery on the domestic front, therefore, will depend on his success in getting other countries to agree to fundamental changes in that global system.

Globalization is not necessarily bad if properly regulated among similar economies. But the globalization of the Clinton-Bush era not only lacked safeguards for labor but rested on two mutually reinforcing, flawed models of growth: debt-financed consumption in the United States and other Anglo-Saxon economies and oversaving and underconsumption in the production-oriented export economies of Asia. Not surprisingly, the global

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integration of these radically different economies produced an unhealthy pattern of growth characterized by asset bubbles and large global trade imbalances, with the United States running large deficits and China and Japan running large surpluses.

The root cause of this unbalanced world economy was the enormous pool of excess savings generated by China, Japan and, more recently, the petrodollar states of the Persian Gulf. This global savings glut, as Federal Reserve chair Ben Bernanke called it, helped fuel a succession of asset bubbles in the United States, culminating in the expansion of easy credit and the rapid run-up of housing prices following the collapse of the tech-stock bubble. The housing and credit bubble in turn helped inflate consumption by enabling households to take on more debt; household debt as a percentage of disposable income rose from 90 percent in the late 1990s to 133 percent in 2007.

This pattern of economic growth had other worrying features. Corporate profits soared as companies in the developed world took advantage of China's low wages, lax environmental standards and undervalued currency to locate production there. But wages and family income in the United States stagnated under this and other low-wage competition (as well as from the declining power of organized labor). As a result, income and wealth inequality increased in the United States and China. The US tradable-goods sector also took a hit as Japan, China and other Asian economies manipulated their currencies to maintain competitive advantage. Over the past seven years the United States lost nearly 4 million manufacturing jobs. During this same period, large chunks of industrial capacity were transferred from more energy-efficient developed countries to energy-inefficient developing countries like China, which compensated for its energy inefficiency with lower wages. This relocation of production helped spur increased demand for oil and gas, setting off an energy price spiral, which was exacerbated by bubblelike speculation in these commodities. Higher oil prices resulted in the transfer of huge amounts of wealth from middle- and working-class people in the United States and other oil-importing countries to oil producers in the Gulf and elsewhere.

This pattern of economic growth was not sustainable because it caused a huge shortfall in global demand, which had to be filled by America's debt-financed consumption—the US current-account (all the goods and services imported balanced against those exported) deficit increased from 1.7 percent of GDP in 1997 to 6.5 percent a decade later. Economic growth came to a crashing halt when US households reached the point where they could no longer take on more debt. The bursting of the housing and credit bubble set off a deleveraging process that has spread across the world economy. In fact, few countries have been immune to falling asset prices and frozen credit markets, or to rapidly falling demand for their goods and services.

Because the incoming Obama administration faces a crisis of global proportions, a recovery program will have to be global in scope, and it will have to correct the huge imbalances globalization created. The president-elect has said very little about his international economic policy. But if he wants to see a sustained recovery, he will have to put forth an international economic reform program that is as bold as his proposed domestic program. The reason is simple: given the high levels of household debt, the US economy can no longer be the demand locomotive that pulls the rest of the world out of recession. Other economies will have to pull alongside the US economy.

The main focus of the new administration's international economic statecraft must be on the large current-account surplus economies—China, Japan, Germany and the petrodollar states, which are running surpluses of 9.5 percent, 4 percent, 7.3 percent and more than 10 percent, respectively. These economies must lead in spurring world growth not only because, with the United States, they bear responsibility for the crisis but also because they are in the best position to lead, given their large surpluses and foreign currency. For better or worse, they must become the collective substitute for the American locomotive, either by stimulating demand in their own economies or by recycling their surpluses to stimulate demand in other economies.

The first element of the new administration's global program should be to encourage China and other large surplus economies to expand domestic demand to offset weakened US consumption. Germany, Japan and the Gulf states are well positioned to expand their economies—preferably by cutting taxes on consumption and increasing social spending to spur more domestic consumption. China has announced what at first appeared to be an impressive stimulus program of $586 billion over two years. But it turned out to be mostly a repackaging of existing spending commitments by local governments and state companies and was heavily weighted toward infrastructure investment, which in the case of China will do little to create domestic consumer demand. Worse, the central government took steps to shore up the export economy by increasing export subsidies and allowing the yuan to depreciate, thus making Chinese goods less expensive in the world market.

> The trade surplus economies of China, Japan and Germany must lead in spurring world growth and pulling the world out of recession.

In shoring up its export as well as its state-led investment sectors, China has embraced what amounts to a beggar-thy-neighbor strategy that supports its growth by taking a larger share of a shrinking global pie. And that is what global depressions are made of. A change in the pattern of China's growth is not only critical but long overdue. Over the past decade, investment and savings there have grown much faster than consumption. Consequently, China has an unusually high savings rate of nearly 50 percent, while consumption constitutes only 35 percent of the economy. A world economy simply cannot function when the second-largest economy (measured by purchasing-power parity) has such a lopsided imbalance between savings and consumption.

The Obama administration therefore needs to signal to Beijing that it is unacceptable for China to run such large surpluses and that it urgently needs to do more to generate consumer demand. The new administration must make clear that if Beijing does not do more to support a global recovery,

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Washington will be forced to radically reshape its trading relationship with China when the crisis is over.

The first appeal to China, however, should be to its own interests as well as to its expressed desire to be a responsible stakeholder in the global economy. Indeed, the overarching message of Obama's international statecraft should be strikingly positive: the United States is not demanding austerity and painful budget cuts, as the Clinton administration did of so many East Asian countries after the 1997–98 crisis. It is asking China to raise the living standards of its workers, spend more on their healthcare and education, and provide a decent pension for older citizens. These things should endear China's leaders to their people and lessen the risk of internal social conflict.

China's leadership, of course, is concerned with creating enough jobs to maintain political stability. Some leaders are reluctant to move away from the strategy of job creation, which has worked over the past decade. Therefore the Obama administration should argue that domestic-generated demand is a more reliable way for China to ensure political stability and job growth than building more factories and financing more exports to a stagnating US and European consumer market.

Obama also needs to make it clear that the reason the United States is pressing China and other Asian economies to raise wages and improve living standards is not so it can reclaim jobs lost to China but to increase global demand so *all* economies can create more jobs. Higher wages in China and other high-savings Asian economies would increase the purchasing power of Asian workers and augment consumer demand. The US economy would indirectly benefit from those higher wages and living standards because it would increase the demand for US goods and services, especially for labor-saving and efficiency-enhancing technology.

The quickest way for China to raise its living standards is by increasing the value of the yuan against the dollar and other international currencies. A stronger yuan would stem future inflation while reducing the cost of food, energy and other imports for Chinese consumers. Appreciating the value of the yuan would be a first step in a broader realignment of world currencies to help correct global trade imbalances. The best short-run option would be for the surplus economies of Asia to re-peg their currencies by letting them appreciate against the dollar but without abandoning the managed peg. This would set the stage for an important institutional change in the global financial architecture whereby the burden would shift to surplus economies to adjust their currencies and stimulate domestic demand, as Keynes originally envisioned.

Some of the surplus economies will not be able to stimulate consumer demand sufficiently in the short term to reduce their surpluses to acceptable levels. That leaves the alternative—recycle some of those surpluses to stimulate growth and economic development in other countries. The United States, of course, will need access to some of these surpluses to help fund its recovery program, but other surpluses could be redirected to support what should be a second pillar of the new administration's world economic recovery plan—namely, establishing a world economic recovery fund to deal with balance-of-payments crises and to support public works projects in developing economies.

A number of countries—Iceland, Hungary, Pakistan and Ukraine—have suffered serious debt and liquidity problems related to the crisis and have sought money from the International Monetary Fund and other sources. These countries may need more money in the months ahead, while countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America may also experience currency-related crises before the world economy is stabilized. The IMF, however, has only $250 billion for managing national debt crises—a mere pittance compared with the rescue plans that the United States, Britain and other G-20 governments have embarked on or those that are needed to deal with the approaching crises in Turkey, the Baltic states and elsewhere.

It is therefore important to shore up the IMF and the World Bank, quickly. The IMF could be a helpful stabilizer in global financial markets if it had access to the sizable reserves of the surplus economies and if it pursued a philosophy more in keeping with the original Keynesian vision of those Bretton Woods organizations. To make this change possible, the Obama administration should offer the surplus economies a new Bretton Woods grand bargain: in return for making outsize contributions to the world economic recovery fund from which the IMF and the World Bank could draw working capital, the United States would support giving these countries a greater say in the running of the IMF and the World Bank.

Previous US administrations blocked efforts to increase the working capital of the IMF and the World Bank because the proposed measures threatened Washington's pre-eminent position in these institutions—as well as its de facto veto, since increasing the allocations of Japan, Germany and other surplus economies in the G-20 would have increased their weighted vote. That has turned out to be shortsighted, because we have been left with cash-strapped and ineffective international institutions. That has put more burden on the Federal Reserve to use US monetary policy as a world crisis stabilizer, which contributed to the buildup of the large asset bubbles of the past decade. It has also left the door open for the big surplus economies to use their sovereign wealth funds to influence the course of world capital markets.

An emergency world economic recovery fund would enable the IMF and the World Bank, along with regional development banks, to carry out a global macroeconomic stimulus program to supplement national fiscal expansion. The IMF could tap the fund to carry out currency stabilization programs and help countries manage balance-of-payments problems. The World Bank and regional development banks could tap the fund to accelerate lending for job-creating public works and social investment in developing countries. Fund money could also be made available to UN projects related to healthcare, education, nutrition and the environment. This increased social and public spending would help stabilize consumption and investment in vulnerable developing and emerging economies, and aid a global economic recovery.

The underlying rationale of such a global stimulus program is that it would be more effective and less potentially inflationary over the longer term than a solely domestic fiscal expansion. Just as important, such a world public-sector program, together with a new system of managing world currencies, would point the way to the institutional reform needed to correct the many failings of the globalization of the Clinton-Bush era. ■

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Books & the Arts.

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Robert Clifton Weaver at the 1968 opening of HUD headquarters

Living for the City

by KIM PHILLIPS-FEIN

In July 2000 a ceremony was held to commemorate the renaming of the headquarters of the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, a modular phalanx of concrete and glass designed by Marcel Breuer and completed in 1968. Democratic luminaries such as Andrew Cuomo, Charles Rangel and Daniel Patrick Moynihan gathered to celebrate the dedicatee's life; he was, in Cuomo's words, a "pioneer who broke through barriers of racism again and again, to build a life of extraordinary achievement and public service." The praise was richly deserved, for Robert Clifton Weaver had been a prominent economist, a longtime advocate of fair-housing laws and a member of the country's black intellectual elite ever since the days before the end of segregation. President Lyndon Johnson had appointed Weaver to head HUD after the agency was founded in 1965, making him the first black cabinet official in American history. And it was Weaver who had dedicated the new HUD building three years later, its Brutalist architecture still cutting-edge and the idealism of the Great Society still fresh.

The story of Weaver's life, as told in Wendell Pritchett's new biography, *Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City*, points to a lesser-known narrative in the long struggle for racial equality—one focused on the politics of Northern cities rather than Southern churches, on economic claims more than moral ones, on regulatory agencies and cabinet meetings rather than lunch-counter sit-ins and mass marches. Yet Pritchett's biography also offers another story, one about the political limits and personal costs of midcentury liberalism for men like Weaver. The New Deal and Great Society policies that Weaver defended only sometimes fulfilled the promise he thought they held for African-Americans, and even then they did so mostly under the pressure of mobilization rather than from the patient and steady work of insiders like him. For all he accomplished during his remarkable life, Weaver emerges as an ambivalent success in Pritchett's book, a man whose greatest dream, that government action could ameliorate the poverty of African-Americans in the country's cities, remained in many ways unrealized. By the time Weaver was rightly memorialized by the renaming of the HUD headquarters in 2000, the building seemed as ponderous and passé as the dreams of Great Society liberalism.

Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City
The Life and Times of an Urban Reformer.
By Wendell E. Pritchett.
Chicago. 433 pp. $30.

Robert Clifton Weaver was born in 1907 in Washington, DC, the second son of parents descended from several generations of strivers. His maternal great-grandfather, although born a slave in North Carolina, was able to obtain training as a carpenter and to hire himself out to the builders of Raleigh. He gave part of his pay to his master and kept the remainder, and over time he was able to purchase not only his freedom but also that of his wife and six children. Weaver's maternal grandfather grew up in Washington, reaching maturity in the era of Reconstruction. He seized the possibilities of that moment, applying to Harvard University's new dental school two years after the end of the Civil War and becoming the first professionally trained black dentist in the

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country. Upon graduation in 1869, he moved back to Washington, opened a practice and established a position for himself in Washington's black elite (the "black 400") at a time when the city was known as the "Capital of the Colored Aristocracy." His daughter—Florence Freeman Farley, Weaver's mother—graduated from high school, a rare accomplishment for young black women in the late nineteenth century. Florence knew Latin and read her children Tennyson and Longfellow. (Weaver's father was a high school graduate and a clerk in the Post Office, one of the highest government positions open to African-Americans in the early twentieth century.) The Freeman family legacy was the ardent belief that individual merit and self-reliance could surmount racial hatred. Weaver remembered his mother telling him as a young boy, "The way to offset color prejudice is to be awfully good at whatever you do."

A loyal New Dealer, Weaver was often the target of fierce attacks from the African-American left.

Weaver and his older brother, Mortimer, whom Weaver thought of as the real intellectual of the family, attended Dunbar High School, which was known as the "crown jewel" of the capital's segregated school system. From there, Weaver went to Harvard, yet the migration north was not the journey of improvement it had been for his grandfather. The forty-two black students in the early 1920s—seventeen undergraduates, twenty-five graduates, all male—mostly lived off campus and took their meals apart from the white students. The university president, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, barred them from the freshman dorms altogether. As Lowell wrote to the father of an incoming black freshman, "It seems to me that for the colored man to claim that he is entitled to have the white man compelled to live with him is a very unfortunate innovation." (Lowell also advocated for a 15 percent admissions quota for Jewish students to limit their enrollment.) Weaver had trouble taking his studies seriously; he was often distracted by the social life of Cambridge, especially by "courting," as he put it. But after his older brother—who had become an English professor—died in May 1929, the educational and professional ambitions of Weaver's family, its mandate of individual achievement, became his own. His parents, he thought, would be terribly disappointed if he became a lawyer, as he had planned. He had to earn a doctorate. And so he became the first black person to receive a PhD from Harvard in economics.

Harvard's economics department in the 1920s was intellectually and socially conservative, a far cry from what it would become in the postwar era, when John Kenneth Galbraith was on the faculty (or even the 1930s, when it was home to Joseph Schumpeter and Alvin Hansen, the "American Keynes"). Weaver's thesis adviser, William Ripley, argued that the biological superiority of Anglo-Saxons explained the industrial advancement of the United States and Europe. When Weaver began graduate school, he wanted to write a dissertation that would "concern Negroes"; he initially proposed a thesis about "Industrial Education and Industrial Opportunities for the Negro." But once he started work on the thesis, he switched to a more abstract argument about wages and prosperity.

The only jobs open to Weaver when he received his doctorate in 1933 were at black colleges (the first tenure-track black professor would be hired by the University of Chicago in 1942). Although he had taught briefly at the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College before he started writing his dissertation, upon completing his degree Weaver turned to politics, first with an organization advocating on behalf of fairer treatment of African-Americans by the National Recovery Administration and then as an adviser on Negro Affairs to Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's Interior Secretary, who directed the New Deal's Public Works Administration (PWA). Weaver was not the only black adviser in the Roosevelt administration; several dozen young black college graduates and longtime civil rights movement leaders made up the Federal Council on Negro Affairs, known colloquially and in the press as the Black Cabinet.

The Great Depression was especially devastating for black Americans. By 1932 black unemployment in American cities was more than 50 percent; in the Southern countryside, black cotton farmers found themselves unable to earn any profit at all. Because it offered some relief, the New Deal won the support of black city dwellers, especially during Roosevelt's second term; by 1939 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was giving financial support to a million black families, and the program employed thousands of black teachers, composers, artists and writers (a quarter of a million African-Americans learned to read and write in the WPA Education Program). Both the WPA and the PWA banned discrimination in their programs.

Yet in part because Roosevelt and his liberal allies in Congress always relied on the support of Dixiecrats, they could never make racial justice a central plank of the New Deal. Southern states often disregarded federal antidiscrimination directives, and Roosevelt didn't risk making reprisals. His first cabinet was largely hostile to civil rights. Agricultural and domestic work—the occupations that employed most black workers—were excluded from Social Security. The actions of the US Housing Authority, which built more than 130,000 housing units and was a precursor to the later postwar federal housing programs, were sabotaged by Jim Crow. Many of these new apartments went to African-Americans who otherwise would have been living in desperate conditions, and civil rights spokesmen praised the program for charging black tenants lower average monthly rents than whites. But in the South, the new federal public housing buildings were always segregated—and they often were in the North, as well. A housing project in Williamsburg provided more than 1,600 apartments for white Brooklynites; one in Harlem gave fewer than half that number to black families. When Weaver, in 1940, gave a speech before the National Negro Congress defending the opportunities the program had offered for integrated housing (some fifty projects housed both black and white families), conservatives seized on his remarks and managed to get the program's funding cut altogether.

Because of the Roosevelt administration's timid commitment to racial justice, Weaver—as a loyal New Dealer—often found himself the target of fierce criticism from the African-American left. The black advisers who worked for the executive branch, wrote Howard University historian Rayford Logan, were merely "the type of Negro that the white people wanted—one who knew what to say and what not to say; one who gladly accepted what the white officials gave Negroes and never made any further inquiry or complaint." This view seemed to be vindicated in 1941 when labor leader A. Philip Randolph threatened to organize a march of 100,000 blacks on Washington to protest discrimination in defense jobs and the Army. Weaver had a new government job at the National Defense Advisory Committee, where he was supposed to help integrate African-Americans into the industrial defense program, but he found himself defending companies like Curtiss-Wright, an aircraft manufacturer, against charges of discrimination. Weaver had been able to

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SPEAK FREELY!!

EVERYONE IS EXCITED ABOUT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN THE WHITE HOUSE—

Do you know where to find and talk to like-minded liberals? Here are some suggestions from *The Nation Guide to the Nation*

Vox Pop.
Their motto "Books, coffee, democracy."—A coffee shop, bookstore, publishing company, and radical gathering spot in one. Started by Sander Hicks, founder of Soft Skull Press, a 9/11 truth-er and all-around activist-provocateur. Brooklyn, NY.

Artist's Caf .
This restaurant, formerly called Artist's Snack Shop, is located in the landmark Fine Arts Building, which was built in 1885 by the Studebaker Company and later became the warren of artists' studios and theaters, as it and still is. Chicago, IL.

The Goose Hollow Inn.
This is Bud Clark's bailiwick. He calls it "Portland's living room." The pub keeper and former mayor of Portland bought up Ann's Tavern in 1967 and renamed it. Portland, OR.

Edward Koren

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negotiate a deal whereby Curtiss-Wright would train 1,200 black workers at its plant in Buffalo, New York, but activists argued that this was insufficient, given that the company's Paterson, New Jersey, factory had only sixteen black workers on a payroll of 16,000. Weaver worried that the protests and demonstrations would stir up "reports of extreme racial chauvinism on the part of Negroes, of super-sensitiveness which complicates their problem of industrial employment and of a discrimination mindedness which influences their participation in the armed forces"—this, at a time when the Army kept its blood supply segregated so that white soldiers would not receive transfusions of blood drawn from African-Americans. Ultimately, Randolph, in return for calling off the protest, was able to secure what Weaver could not—a guarantee of colorblind hiring practices in defense programs and the creation of a Fair Employment Practices Commission to investigate charges of racism. The armed forces remained segregated until after the war.

Weaver left Washington during World War II and—along with his wife and their adopted son (Pritchett says the child was most likely born to an unmarried relative)—moved first to Chicago and then to New York City, holding various positions in and out of academia. It was during this period that he wrote his second and most influential book: *The Negro Ghetto* (1948), a counterpoint to Gunner Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. (His first book, *Negro Labor: A National Problem*, was a well-received treatment of employment discrimination.) Instead of focusing on the South, *The Negro Ghetto* treated residential segregation in the urban North—and it was one of the first academic works to do so, long before the notion of the "inner city" became as well worn as an old penny. Instead of looking at racism primarily as a "moral issue," as Pritchett puts it, Weaver sought to explain "the economic motivations and institutions" that drove patterns of segregation in Northern cities. He explained how brokers, by creating severe housing shortages in black neighborhoods and by stimulating anxieties about integration, were able to wrest high profits from frightened white families selling their homes. The economic dynamics of white flight needed to be challenged if residential segregation was to be overcome.

Powerful and detailed, *The Negro Ghetto* provided an argument in favor of using public housing to create integrated neighborhoods and dismantle the myths of prejudice. Weaver criticized the creation of segregated projects, arguing that they would only exacerbate the problems of the ghetto and that it was "a matter of grave concern to Negroes and liberals when the rise in institutionalized residential segregation was accelerated by housing planned, financed and sometimes owned and managed by the Federal government." The book also indicted the irrationality of racial covenants (which stipulated that homes had to be sold only to white buyers).

Weaver argued that segregation couldn't be overcome without also challenging white flight.

In 1948, shortly before the publication of *The Negro Ghetto*, the Supreme Court overturned racial covenants. Although the Court's decision did not cite Weaver's research directly, his work was widely thought to have affected the outcome; perhaps in part because of its influence in the case, *The Negro Ghetto* garnered glowing reviews. Carey McWilliams described it as the "finest study of its kind that has appeared to date," and the *New York Times* pronounced the book "a comprehensive, authentic survey of an acute social problem."

The Negro Ghetto made Weaver's academic name, and he became a leader in the fight for fair-housing laws. In the 1950s, New York Governor Averell Harriman appointed him deputy commissioner of housing (he also served as rent administrator for the state's rent-control board). Yet as Pritchett makes painfully clear in the second half of his book, despite Weaver's mounting successes, the sense of insecurity instilled in him as a young striver never entirely subsided. He and his family rarely attended the parties and other social events that were a regular part of life for many black intellectuals in New York at the time. His subordinates referred to the "Weaver treatment," which one described as a politeness "so unrelieved in its iciness that its victims felt they would be warmer if they curled up in a refrigerator." When a friend called to let Weaver know that he was being offered a job in Harriman's administration, Weaver at first hung up on her, thinking she was joking.

A bigger call for Weaver came in 1960, when John F. Kennedy nominated him to head the Housing and Home Finance Agency, a predecessor to HUD. After being redbaited in hearings by Congressional conservatives, one of whom asked if it bothered him that *The Negro Ghetto* had been named a "book of lasting value" by an operation called the Workers Book Shop in New York City, Weaver was confirmed. His tenure had some real successes: in November 1962 Kennedy signed an executive order banning discrimination in federal housing programs—something Weaver had fought for ever since the New Deal, made possible at long last in the early '60s by the surging civil rights movement. But Weaver remained a man apart in the capital, a full participant in neither the Kennedy administration nor the civil rights movement. He was hardly involved in the discussions over King's 1963 March on Washington (it is not clear that he even attended the demonstration). He told a reporter that "black chauvinism" was as bad as white, and that he was involved with civil rights "as a liberal, rather than a Negro." But he had few friends in the Kennedy administration; all of the president's civil rights advisers were white, and Pritchett notes that Weaver was expected to stay focused on housing, not to get involved in broader conversations about civil rights. Weaver accepted this position, preferring, as Pritchett says, to be seen "as a professional who was black rather than a racial advocate." It is not hard, though, to imagine Weaver's frustration with being expected to represent the race while at the same time being excluded from the most important debates about racial politics. Acquaintances described Weaver as "basically a loner" who went every day to the counter of a hotel restaurant to eat a sandwich for lunch by himself.

The political costs of such isolation became clear after Johnson created HUD in September 1965. Since Weaver was the head of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, many thought Johnson would quickly tap him for the job. Instead, Johnson dragged his feet. He told Roy Wilkins of the NAACP that Weaver was not a sufficiently "imaginative" leader and that the first head of HUD should be a white man—perhaps the philanthropist Laurence Rockefeller—who could "do a hell of a lot more for the Negro than the Negroes can do for themselves in these cities." For years Weaver had hoped to be taken seriously as a liberal leader on his own terms, without regard to his race. Later on, he said he "would like to feel that I was appointed not because I was a Negro, but maybe in spite of that fact." But for Johnson the appointment was about nothing else—if he selected Weaver, he feared, critics would accuse him of not picking the best man for the job; but if the job didn't go to Weaver, he would disappoint the "little Negro boys in Podunk, Mississippi,"

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and civil rights leaders would say "when you get down to the nut-cutting…this Southerner just couldn't quite cut the mustard—he just couldn't name a Negro to the cabinet." For the proud, restrained Weaver, the waiting was torturous, a "very, very difficult thing," as he remembered in later years. Humiliated and made miserable by reports of Johnson interviewing other candidates, he nearly resigned. And when Johnson at last offered the HUD post to Weaver early in 1966, it was almost too late for him to enjoy it.

Once in office, Weaver presided over a great expansion of public housing. More affordable housing was built under the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 than at any other time in the nation's history, and Weaver's proposals were the ones the administration followed. A national fair-housing law was finally passed in 1968, with Weaver lobbying Congress to support it. Yet these were also the years of the riots in cities like Detroit, of deepening poverty and deindustrialization. Black radicals criticized the housing projects that Weaver helped to build as simply reconstituting the ghetto in new ways. They rejected his quest for a race-blind meritocracy; in a July 1967 column, Jimmy Breslin quoted one such activist: "You know what everybody says about Weaver? They say, 'He's light and bright and damn near white.'" Weaver was deeply troubled by the riots, which he argued represented a deepening "community despair and hopelessness" that could only be undone by concerted government action. But the Great Society lasted just a few years, razed by the politics of backlash as white city dwellers reacted to the housing projects rising in their neighborhoods by fleeing the cities in a panic about living next door to blacks. The public housing projects that Weaver had once viewed as the beachhead of a better society came instead to more closely resemble holding pens for the poorest of the poor, people left out of any social compact whatsoever. The projects became exactly what Weaver had once wanted above all to avoid: a second ghetto. Not only the vision of public housing but the buildings themselves seemed to have failed.

Weaver left Washington with Johnson, telling the president, shortly before Johnson chose not to seek re-election, that he planned to resign at the end of 1968 no matter who was in the White House. He returned to New York City, where he served as the first president of Baruch College of CUNY. There, his long career in public service had a sad coda: he sat on the board of directors of the Municipal Assistance Corporation, the organization created to float bonds on behalf of New York City during its fiscal crisis and flirtation with bankruptcy during

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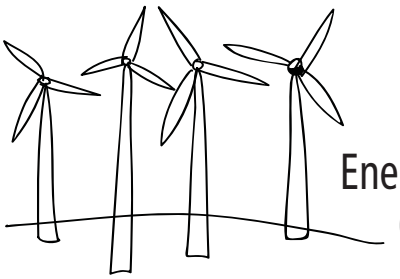

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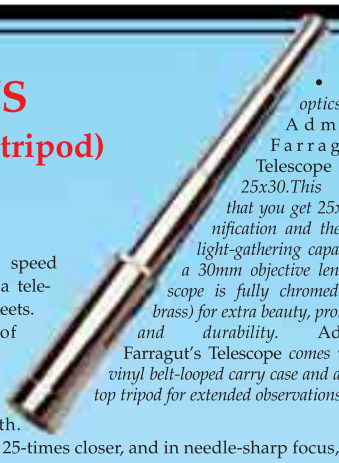

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the mid-1970s. The MAC helped to enforce a dramatic program of restructuring for the city government, cutting funds for daycare, schools, firemen, police, social workers and hospitals, as well as instituting tuition for CUNY. Although the New York fiscal crisis in many ways marked the end of the expansive liberal vision Weaver had long championed, he was a silent member of the board, doing little to shape the course of events. He told an African-American State Assembly member that "you may be sure" that when "specific issues affecting minorities" came before MAC, he would speak up for "what I believe to be the interests of those so long disadvantaged." But according to Pritchett, the minutes of MAC meetings contain no evidence that Weaver ever tried to do so; perhaps he felt there was nothing he could really do. He ended his career at Hunter College, living on the Upper West Side until his death in 1997. His wife—a light-skinned black woman who was able to pass as white and who received hate mail from segregationists chiding her for marrying a black man—had died a few years earlier, and their adopted son (the "Bobby" to whom he dedicated *The Negro Ghetto*) had died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound in the early 1960s. Weaver—true to form—said nothing publicly about his son's death and destroyed all the letters of condolence he received. Three years after Weaver's death, the HUD headquarters was rededicated in his name.

By the end of Pritchett's book, one is struck by how much Weaver was hindered by the New Deal and Great Society liberalism that nurtured his long career. In some ways midcentury liberalism was always a precarious politics, especially with regard to race. In the 1930s the Roosevelt administration, never unequivocally committed to civil rights, made its peace with the Southern Democrats; in the '60s Johnson's expansion of the welfare state coexisted with a deep paternalism. For a young, ambitious black man like Weaver, the choice to ally himself with these mainstream liberals—as opposed to working with the more radical social movements that so often forced their hands—could not help but yield a certain frustration. Pritchett avoids venturing into the dangerous terrain of psychohistory, preferring to present Weaver as a pioneer in race-blind politics. Yet it also seems possible that Weaver's careful and lifelong eschewal of radicalism was the result, in part, of his own deep sense of an imperative, instilled by his parents and grandparents, that his individual accomplishments were the ultimate measure of success. And if at times this meant steering clear of engagements that might prove dangerous to his quest for mobility and security—that was the cost of moving forward in the world.

One can't read Pritchett's book without thinking of Barack Obama, whose career seems, in certain respects, a reflection of Weaver's ambiguous legacy. Obama's victory undeniably marks one kind of progress toward racial equality. And surely Weaver would be thrilled to see Obama in the White House (which was built mostly by slaves and free blacks), identifying with the candidate's choice to carve out a career at the pinnacle of American politics and his promise to transcend the politics of race. (Weaver might also have appreciated that during Obama's tenure as a community organizer, he worked in the Altgeld Gardens housing project in Chicago—a World War II development that was part of the early wave of public housing.) Yet even as it is now possible for a black man to become the president of the United States, the cities to which Weaver dedicated his life remain nearly as sharply divided by race and poverty as they have ever been. The battered buildings of the housing projects of Chicago and Detroit that Weaver worked so long, with so much hope, to build, cast their long shadows on the pages of this book, bleak reminders that the triumph of an individual cannot alone make up for these larger defeats. The strength of *Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City* is that it enables the reader to see the victory and the loss at once. ■

Untitled, circa 1975

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Point and Place

by BARRY SCHWABSKY

After having spent some hours at the Whitney Museum among William Eggleston's photographs, I couldn't stop my mind's eye from framing each passing place as an interesting photograph. I was in a taxi on the way to the airport and thinking hard about walking straight to the duty-free shop to see what they had in the way of cameras. But in the end, I knew better than to waste my money. I've been around images long enough to know what illusions they can work. And having memorized Henry James's caveat to writers—"The art of representation bristles with questions the very terms of which are difficult to apply and to appreciate"—I recollected in time that it applies to the art of the camera as well as to that of the pen. Most people realize there's more to, say, making music than just wanting to; you need some technique to mediate your desire. Writing seems a bit more available because, after all, language is everybody's tool kit. But photography is even more seductive. Hasn't the technique been built into the technology? Just point and shoot.

Calling his grand and gorgeous retrospective at the Whitney "Democratic Camera," Eggleston might seem to imply that anybody can do it. (The exhibition can be seen there through January 25; it then travels to the Haus der Kunst in Munich, where it will run from February 20 to May 17.) Well, maybe anybody could have made these pictures—anybody, as long as he was born in 1939; raised in Mississippi (in the town where Emmett Till was later lynched) as the asthmatic scion of a wealthy old planter family; developed an early affinity for art and music, and for the gear associated with it (cameras, audio equipment); passed through Ole Miss and various other Southern universities without bothering to take a degree; discovered

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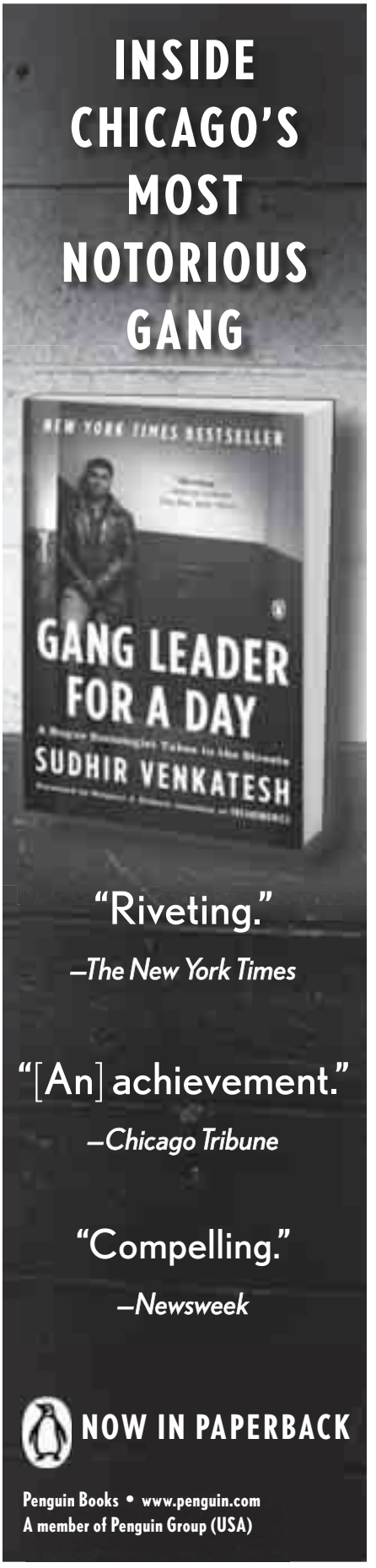
Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment* at just the decisive moment when he was still young enough for the book to have the deepest and most unprepared impact yet mature enough to be able to start reacting constructively to it; set up house in Memphis (where he was born); and developed his art in relative isolation yet remained savvy enough to know that when the work was ready, the only thing to do was to take a suitcase full of prints to New York to lay before MoMA's legendary photography curator John Szarkowski. Anybody could have made them, that is, who was William Eggleston.

Eggleston not only makes it look easy, as natural as opening your eyes, but seems to have come upon his art all at once. That's not to say he never made any apprentice work, only that it had almost nothing in it of what we'd now recognize as the Eggleston eye, and that while there was a transitional period between apprenticeship and fully achieved mastery, it happened in the blink of an eye. "When we met, over forty years ago," writes music journalist Stanley Booth in the Whitney's exhibition catalog, "Eggleston…was already, in his early twenties, reputed to be a 'serious' photographer." Maybe that was the problem: Eggleston's black-and-white photographs of the '60s don't wear their seriousness lightly enough. Some of them are closer to a documentary style than his later pictures were. In others one does see him reaching out for the more oblique, more mercurial sense of what a picture can be, of densely encapsulating lived experience, that would soon be his. His gaze is drawn to the same kinds of places and people one will glimpse in his mature work, but we don't experience them as concretely as in the images he would soon begin making in color. There are intimations of that mature oblique texture in an untitled image taken in 1968 in Memphis: on an eerily empty suburban street, a man stands at the side of the road, one hand bent at an odd angle as if he were pushing off from a nonexistent pole that he'd been holding on to the night before—the gesture points against the direction in which he appears to be fitfully moving. He casts a long shadow on the lawn behind him—as the photographer does across the road that separates them. It's as if the cold morning light of de Chirico's "metaphysical" piazzas had been translated to the New South.

One sees in Eggleston's early color photographs, from around 1969 on, several such scenes of isolated individuals in wide, inhospitable landscapes—the yawning sense of existential disconnection built on an elementary tension between the figure's verticality and the picture's horizontality. Speaking of his childhood, Eggleston recently said, "I never had the feeling that I didn't fit in. But probably I didn't." That's the kind of person these images seem to be about: someone who is detached from his or her environment without realizing it. Szarkowski wrote in his introduction to *William Eggleston's Guide*, the book that accompanied the exhibition he curated at MoMA in 1976, "The pictures reproduced here are about the photographer's home, about his place, in both important meanings of that word. One might say about his identity." Eggleston has always denied being a "Southern artist" and rightly points out that he travels widely and has made many fine images elsewhere. His is certainly not the "Gothic" South of Faulkner and McCullers, whose photographic offspring might be Ralph Eugene Meatyard. But he's as Southern in his rejection of identification with the South as he is in his evident fascination with its landscape and the people who have made and marred it: they are all here, black and white, rich and poor, not as exemplars of any societal or political problem but all affected by a similar unease with their place. Eggleston once said that the compositional basis for his pictures is the Confederate flag. It's a shocking statement, or it would be if it wasn't more likely that he was making a joke at Szarkowski's expense, the latter having relayed to him MoMA director Alfred Barr Jr.'s observation that Eggleston's images typically "radiate from a central, circular core." But it encapsulates, in any case, the tension between Eggleston's evident formalism and the intense if inexplicit psychosocial unease his imagery embodies.

Eggleston is the opposite of a documentarian because he uproots his images from their anecdotal context. What is left after this removal? A structure of feeling. A good example of this is in a picture called *Sumner, Mississippi, Cassidy Bayou in Background*, circa 1970. In terms of color, it's one of the most restrained photographs Eggleston has ever made: pure russet autumn. The ground, here in Eggleston's hometown, is covered with dry leaves bedded on their own shadows. Although the camera's viewpoint is downward-looking, so that there is no horizon and therefore the sky is unseen, the day must be overcast; the sallow light seems to be draining right out of the scene. In the background, on the other side of the water, are some houses, but their distance emphasizes the feeling of isolation. In the central foreground stands a middle-aged white man in a black suit, hands in his pockets. There's a grim, somewhat lost look on his face. To the right, just behind him, stands a black man wearing a white jacket and black trousers. His hands are in his pockets too, but his posture is a little more relaxed than that



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of his white counterpart; and his facial expression is clearer, his thoughts seemingly turned less exclusively inward. To the left is a white car with the driver's-side door open. Through the glare on the windshield one can just make out its driver's head and a hand on the steering wheel. There's no road to be seen, so one might wonder what a car is doing here.

Eggleston has mentioned that this picture was shot at a funeral—which isn't surprising but hardly seems to explain anything. More to the point is how locked into place these people are by the checkerboard alternation of white and black—white car, black suit, white face, black trousers, white jacket, black face—which stands out so forcefully against their gloomy russet surroundings. Eggleston neither turns the scene into abstraction for its own sake nor uses it as the occasion for a sanctimonious comment on race relations—saying that our differences are transcended in the face of death, for instance, or on the contrary that our differences stubbornly maintain themselves even in the face of death, both of which would be jejune. Any clue that this is a cemetery, or any detail that would tend to make the image into a memento mori, is out of the picture anyway. Part of the power of an image like *Sumner, Mississippi* comes from Eggleston's refusal to editorialize or to simplify. The viewer's attention is forcefully drawn to its formal structure, but there's no leaving it at that; likewise, though we are not invited to moralize about the social condition of the people who inhabit this place, not for a moment are we allowed to stop thinking about it. The image draws these two aspects into a knot that only tightens as we try to wriggle out of it.

Even when Eggleston does seem to be editorializing, he probably isn't. In this sense, knowing something about the man who made the pictures is most valuable for what it tells you about how *not* to interpret them. Consider a picture from around 1983–86 of a little boy poring over a gun magazine, surrounded by a beatific light that comes near to forming a halo around his head. The irony of this angelic child being corrupted by America's gun culture is patent—until one sees the title, *Winston*, and realizes that this is the photographer's son; in which case the magazine could well be Eggleston's too, and so one's reflexive sense of irony has to evaporate, leaving one with an image that is far more disquieting than it would otherwise have been.

Bearing in mind Szarkowski's perception of the importance of place in Eggleston's work, it's probably natural to think of him as essentially a photographer of landscapes and interiors, for whom the human figure is secondary. And he does not discourage this notion. "Generally, to me, people, human beings, are not terrifically interesting to look at in photographs," Eggleston once told me. "It's what they do that's more interesting." But that statement is partly belied by what's on view at the Whitney. Many of his strongest images, especially early on, are of people, and what's interesting is how they're not doing anything. Arguably, it's through this approach that he swerves away from his great precursor, Cartier-Bresson. For the Frenchman, shooting pictures at an oblique angle to the depicted scene was a way of creating strong diagonals that give his images their dynamism, and this compositional dynamism expresses what the people in the picture are doing. Eggleston's diagonals—the crossed bars of his imaginary Confederate banner—tend to fix his people in place, evoking an enormous and vibrant space but one in which they seem at little or no liberty to move around. They are pinned down by history, geography, class, race, circumstance—and we can see their discomfort about that.

Eggleston creates an enormous, vibrant space where people have little liberty to move around.

After the mid-1970s, people start to become scarcer in Eggleston's images. Everything else that speaks of their presence and their passing becomes Eggleston's focus—their houses, fields, cars, roads, stores, coffee shops. What brought on this change? It's curious that at the end of the '60s and in the early '70s, when Eggleston took many of his most famous images, he did not yet know how to realize them. The prints he derived from color negative film dissatisfied him, lacking color density and nuance. In color slide film he discovered a saturation he thought he could work with, but he couldn't print the results. In 1974 he began using the dye-transfer printing process, typically used only for high-end commercial work, which allowed him to exercise an extraordinary degree of control over color. "By the time you get into all those dyes," Eggleston has said, "it doesn't look at all like the scene, which in some cases is what you want." It might be said that all the color pictures made by Eggleston until 1974 were made, unknowingly, for a process he didn't yet know he could use—like an eighteenth-century composer writing for the harpsichord music that might have been better realized on the piano. But having discovered the process and used it to find the hidden depths in his existing imagery, he let the medium direct him to change his focus; from the mid-'70s on, Eggleston exhibits a new absorption in the surfaces of things. A kind of Pop sensibility enters his work, for instance in the visual glut of hyped-up acidic color in an untitled still life, circa 1983–86, of an outdoor lunch setting with a roast chicken, corn on the cob and all the trimmings set out on a checkered tablecloth. Finally, in many of his images from the past decade, it is neither person nor place nor thing but rather the effigy of a human presence that fascinates him—an eerily synthetic-looking statue of the Virgin Mary, for instance, in *Untitled (Orange County)*, circa 1999–2001, or the TV image of a man as reflected by night in what is presumably a hotel window in *Untitled (Kyoto)*, 2001. Eggleston's work of the past three decades is as good as that of anyone alive, with the sole exception of the man who made the breakthrough work of the late 1960s to the mid-'70s that has seared itself into the mind of anyone who's ever seen *Eggleston's Guide*.

And that includes the images without people. Just try forgetting *Greenwood, Mississippi, 1973*—which everyone calls "The Red Ceiling." There hasn't been a surface that red in art since Matisse's *The Red Studio*, but if anything, the Eggleston is even redder. (Eggleston disproves Matisse's idea that "the quantity of color was its quality"—that to increase the surface area covered by a given color is to increase its intensity; the peculiar sense of concentration and density conveyed by Eggleston's red could not have been extended to the scale of Matisse's painting, or of the similarly scaled photographs that some photographers have been producing in recent years.) This is another Confederate flag composition, yet at the center is not a person but a bare light bulb hanging from a garishly painted ceiling; all the more piercing in its misery. This is a transfixing, beautiful picture of a hideous place. Who could exist in such a room? A clue is supplied by the top of a poster that can be glimpsed at the bottom right corner: it seems to show a correlation between astrological signs and certain sexual positions. So this might be a brothel. Someone might have spent many a dreary working hour staring at that ceiling, and maybe no one else ever gave it a glance until this photographer showed up. As usual with Eggleston, the fact, or possible fact, remains unembroidered with commentary. As with all his best pictures, this one puts the viewer in the middle of a life one might never have chosen for oneself, which could remind us that the person whose life it is might not have chosen it either. ■

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BACK TALK

GREG ROBINSON/SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

The Rev. Jim Jones (right) with an unidentified man at Jonestown, November 18, 1978

Tim Reiterman

In 1977 hundreds of members of the Peoples Temple left California to join their leader, the Rev. Jim Jones, at his 3,800-acre compound in Guyana. Many were African-Americans who were drawn to the commune by Jones's embrace of integration. One year later, US Congressman Leo Ryan and a small group of journalists flew to Jonestown to investigate reports of discontent there. When Ryan's delegation was preparing to leave on November 18, 1978, Jones loyalists opened fire on the dirt airstrip; Ryan, three journalists and a commune defector were killed. That night, more than 900 Jonestowners drank cyanide-laced grape Flavor Aid and died; Jones was later found with a bullet hole in his head. Journalist Tim Reiterman was part of Ryan's delegation, and in 1982 he and John Jacobs published *Raven*, detailing the history of Jones and the Peoples Temple. *Raven*, which had been listed as the most in-demand out-of-print biography by Bookfinder.com, has been reissued by Penguin ($18.95) for the thirtieth anniversary of the massacre. The book is a macabre rejoinder to the sign Jones hung above his throne in Jonestown: Those Who Do Not Remember the Past Are Condemned to Repeat It. —*Christine Smallwood*

Why is the life of Jim Jones still an important story?

What happened in Jonestown was tragic, and it's important to understand that the people who joined the Peoples Temple did so for good reasons. They were mostly ordinary people who wanted to help. They created a familylike dynamic as well as a commitment to various social ideals, especially racial equality and social justice.

The extent of Jones's political power in California may come as a surprise to people who don't know the history of the Peoples Temple. How did Jones become so connected?

Jones acquired political power through assisting politicians, mostly in San Francisco, with campaign work. He had a reputation of being able to deliver people to rallies and other events at a moment's notice. He also created the illusion that his church was much bigger than it really was. He claimed there were 20,000 or 30,000 members in California, but in fact there were about 3,000. He was credited with being instrumental in the election of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone, the DA Joseph Freitas and Sheriff Richard Hongisto—a relatively liberal slate that came into office [in 1975]. Moscone then rewarded Jones, who was pushing for an appointment, with the chairmanship of the San Francisco Housing Authority Commission. When prominent political figures came to the Bay Area, Jones was there. He went on Walter Mondale's private jet when Mondale came to San Francisco, and he got an audience with Rosalynn Carter before she became first lady. He was a most unusual Housing Authority chairman because he had bodyguards. His entourage attracted the interest of Marshall Kilduff, who was then at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He eventually wrote a *New West* magazine piece about Jones [in August 1977], which was the first exposé.

***Raven* includes two sections of photos that range from Jones as a child and young man to the bodies in Guyana. How do photographs help to tell this particular story?**

The Jonestown photos were taken by Greg Robinson, who was there with me from the San Francisco *Examiner* and was killed on the airstrip. They convey, in a way my words could not, the tension that existed in Jonestown: defectors wanted to leave with Congressman Ryan and go back to the United States. The morning after Greg was shot, I took a photo, using one of his cameras, of his body, those of the others on the airstrip and the airplane that we were boarding when the gunfire broke out. We were later airlifted to a hospital in Washington, DC, by the military. A copy of the *New York Times* was brought into my room the next morning, and that photo on the airstrip of the plane and the bodies was large, front and center. It took up a big chunk of the front page. It brought home to me not just how important it was to have an image of what happened but also the magnitude of the event. I approached that trip as a local journalist working for a newspaper that didn't circulate beyond Northern California, and suddenly the story became something much bigger, something incomprehensible that left people around the world pretty shocked initially but I think finally just baffled.

Why?

People have seized on the photos, and they've remembered the bloated bodies and the shooting at the plane. But they've never really come to understand why it happened. The answer lies in the psyche of Jim Jones. A lot of people dismissed him as a do-gooder, a liberal who went bad, but if you go back to his childhood and his adolescence, you can see the seeds of his madness and sickness. He was able to hide the negative, cruel and unbalanced aspects of his personality from many people. Some of them began to see through him and escaped his grasp. Others rationalized them or were so compromised themselves that they stayed with Jones until the end.

You recently left the *Los Angeles Times*, after nineteen years, to be the news editor for Northern California at the Associated Press, where you started your career. As a lifetime print journalist, what are your thoughts about the state of newspapers today?

I think it's critical, regardless of the media platforms, that news organizations continue to ambitiously and aggressively pursue the most difficult stories. When news organizations are downsizing, scaling back and in some cases dying, the tendency is to abandon the tough stories, leave them to somebody else, go for the easy, quick, entertaining pieces that might be satisfying in the short term but don't really enhance our understanding of the world in any meaningful way. The puzzle that newspapers are grappling with, of course, has been how to present news on the Internet and do it in a way that is profitable. I don't think anyone's figured that out yet. But as long as the content is good and serves the public, I think there will be a desire for it. ■

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Ranters and Corantos

by RICHARD BYRNE

In the beginning, of course, there was the printing press.

It arrived in England in 1476, more than a century before journalism took any recognizable shape in that country. What news did get printed in the first century of English printing was largely produced at the government's behest as propaganda, or confined narrowly to noteworthy oddities or tragedies that did not impinge on state interests.

The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 was the key spur to an explosive period of growth in English journalism. By December 1620, "corantos" (single folio sheets) of news about the wars in Europe, printed in English, were making their way across the English Channel from Holland. At first, King James I banned corantos. But public demand for them was intense, and the government's desire to control and domesticate the news of fierce sectarian wars pouring in from abroad proved irresistible. In less than a year after the corantos arrived, a publisher named Nathaniel Butter received royal permission to translate and publish news into English.

Ben Jonson, the Renaissance dramatist and poet, detested the suddenly burgeoning news industry of his day and let fly in 1626 with *The Staple of News*, a virulent slap down of newspapers written so that "the age may see her own folly, or hunger and thirst after published pamphlets of news, set out every Saturday but made all at home, and no syllable of truth in them: than which there cannot be a greater disease in nature, or a fouler scorn put upon the times." It was Butter's operation that Jonson satirized so mercilessly, and the reader gets a sense of Butter's sensibility from a fantastical pamphlet that he printed shortly before securing a royal monopoly. "Good Newes from Christendome"—a purported translation from the Italian—relates news of a vision above "the supposed Tombe of Mahomet" that signaled the conversion of all Muslims to Christianity. And as a bonus, the pamphlet tossed in accounts of "the miraculous rayning of Bloud about Rome."

Richard Byrne is a journalist and playwright who lives in Washington, DC. He blogs at Balkans via Bohemia (richbyrne.blogspot.com).

The Staple of News is not one of Jonson's best works, and his lampoon of the newfangled journalism of his era lacks the bite of his attack on charlatans peddling the Philosopher's Stone and their gullible believers in *The Alchemist* (1610). But his savage complaints about a profession riddled with falsehoods, errors and biases, as well as being a virtual slave to vulgar commerce, pluck strikingly familiar chords. As dwindling readership, crippling layoffs and shrinking news holes ravage the industry more savagely than any mere criticism, today's journalists may count themselves lucky that Jonson is no longer around to pile on. But if the prognosis for print journalism is as grim as that of alchemy, are there lessons for its survival or renewal to be learned from a backward glance at its earliest days?

A
True Relation of a most
desperate Murder, committed vpon
the Body of Sir Iohn Tindall
Knight, one of the Masters of the
Chancery:
LONDON

"A True Relation of a Most Desperate Murder," London, 1617

FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

An exhibit at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC—"Breaking News: Renaissance Journalism and the Birth of the Newspaper" (through January 31)—argues that question in the affirmative. The public appetite for news is insatiable, its creators assert, and the exhibit traces the profession that has satisfied that need from the gossipy manuscript letters passed from hand to hand in the late sixteenth century to the press's emergence

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as an economically viable force in politics and culture in the early eighteenth century. The exhibit's curators, Chris Kyle (a historian at Syracuse University) and Jason Peacey (a historian at University College, London), delight in making the more immediate connections between past and present. The 1613 pamphlet "The Wonders of This Windie Winter" is an early example of today's disaster journalism. And then there are the seventeenth-century entries in the true-crime genre: pamphlets describing deaths, "great and bloudy" murders or "barbarous and most cruell" beheadings, illustrated by rough woodcuts of the mayhem. But Kyle and Peacey also tease out larger issues lurking in the mass of early journalism they have culled from the Folger's holdings. In doing so, they provide a useful history of a complex interplay between government and the press at the industry's birth, and a valuable window into how journalism coped with (and survived) its early encounters with roadblocks and with transformative change.

However much in demand the product of early journalists had become, their path to operational stability and success was never easy. Both James I and Charles I, his doomed son and heir, issued a series of edicts and bans on the industry during their reigns. Kyle and Peacey point out that Butter was jailed and subsequently put out of business for six years, largely because of fluctuations in the fortunes of Protestants in the Thirty Years' War. Despite these obstacles and strictures, by the time fierce clashes between King Charles I and Parliament had escalated into open warfare in 1642, the industry was powerful enough to become a weapon in that conflict.

The English Civil War was less a free market for journalism than a freewheeling market. Both sides published papers, wildly spinning the news of the conflict and both parties' rationales for power. The Royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* and *Mercurius Pragmaticus* jousted for hearts and minds with the Parliamentarian *Mercurius Britanicus* and *Mercurius Anti-Pragmaticus*. There were even opportunists such as Marchamont Nedham, a journalist who was talented enough to work as a propagandist for both sides of the conflict. Nedham started the *Britanicus* as a parliamentary response to Royalist propaganda, then switched sides and worked for the king as the writer of the *Pragmaticus*. After the Royalists were vanquished (and after some time doing penance in a parliamentary jail), Nedham became the writer and publisher of the official state papers of the new English Republic.

If the tale of Marchamont Nedham seems topsy-turvy, one must keep in mind just how chaotic a period it was. The years between the execution of Charles I in 1649 and Oliver Cromwell's seizure of power as Lord Protector in 1653 were a vacuum for effective government power—and for censorship. It was a gap quickly filled by a dazzling array of new political and religious movements (Levellers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchists, Ranters). These movements—and their opponents—left a lengthy paper trail behind them. As part of the exhibit, Kyle and Peacey include a 1650 pamphlet attacking the Ranters, a small but vocal group whose radical and apocalyptic libertarianism has attracted interest and controversy among contemporary scholars. The author of "The Ranters Ranting" promises his readers a lascivious peek at the group's "blasphemous opinions" and "several kinds of mirth and dancing." And yes, the author includes a beheading or two for good measure. Defining your opponent down, indeed.

Eventually Cromwell and his party used the same tools of repression favored by their Royalist predecessors—edicts and stringent licensing of the press—to curb political and religious diversity and dissent. (The curators observe that Cromwell's regime allowed only two newspapers to be legally printed—both written by Nedham.) But as Jerome Friedman pointed out in *The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford's Flies*, even this Puritan repression could not stifle a giddy subculture of pamphlets that obsessed over strange events and prophecies, gave gruesome accounts of hideous crimes and celebrated moral turpitude and Robin Hood–like criminals. Friedman wrote that "if these simple ideas, embroidered on a cloth of folk belief and laced with superstition and magic, do not indicate why the revolution began, they may tell us a great deal about why the revolution failed."

Aside from the Ranter pamphlet, Kyle and Peacey don't venture far into this interesting byway of religious and social history. It is a diversion from their main narrative. By the end of the exhibit, they write that they have stopped at a moment in the early eighteenth century when "all of the key elements of the modern printed news industry were largely in place." And the forms and figures of journalism do become more recognizable as the exhibit winds to its close. Advertisements and reviews of the arts turn up, as do editorials and election coverage. Publishing schedules become more regularized. Slippery media operators like Sir

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The Religious-Secular Divide

■ "The Religious-Secular Divide: The US Case" is the next social research conference at The New School, New York City, March 5–6. Keynote speaker: Charles Taylor. Tensions between religion and secularism are longstanding, widespread and increasingly fierce. These are evidenced by debates over evolution; separation between religion and education and between religion and science; and religious influences on political decisions. This will be a forum for discussions about the past and future separation between the religious and the secular. www.socres.org/religioussecularidivide.

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Roger L'Estrange also appear. A former Royalist agitator and spy, L'Estrange slid easily from conspiratorial politics into a powerful dual role in the Restoration as sole overseer of the press and a monopoly publisher. It was L'Estrange who, in 1681, articulated a rationale for the explicit use of the media to advance government policy: "Tis the press that has made 'em mad, and the press must set 'em right again."

If this battle between government and the press is inevitable, what factors tip the balance in journalism's favor? Kyle and Peacey place the bold articulation of the freedoms at stake in that battle at the top of the list. John Milton's justly famous *Areopagitica*, for instance, was written in 1644, when the Parliament he supported rolled back press freedoms granted by the king a few years earlier. This early argument for the freedom of the press—made against one's own allies—has a place of honor in the exhibit. But Kyle and Peacey also make clear that documents are never enough to strengthen the press. The other great tool in creating press freedom was the largely egalitarian nature of the journalistic enterprise. Governments, clerics and elites felt that they had the power and right, as Parliament put it in 1643, to suppress "the great late abuses and frequent disorders in Printing…to the great defamation of Religion and Government." Or, to quote L'Estrange again, the newspaper "made the Multitude too familiar with the actions and Counsels of their superiors, too pragmatical and censurious, and gives them not only an itch but a kind of colourable right, and license to be meddling with the government."

It is an attitude that has never quite faded from the corridors of power. Indeed, the history of the Bush administration's press relations often proved that such sentiments can be easily reanimated and can take the shape of blatant bullying (Ari Fleischer's dictum that Americans should "watch what they say" after 9/11), selective leaking (the Valerie Plame affair) and even the simple erasure of files and records. In the early days of journalism, such thinking was opposed not by equally powerful players ranged in opposition but rather by a diverse and often lowly gang of writers and publishers. Barriers to entry into the journalistic enterprise were low, Kyle and Peacey observe; bargemen, ironmongers and even women were included. "Breaking News" gives plentiful evidence that modern journalism was built, in large part, from the bottom up.

Comparisons between this egalitarianism and the Internet's lowering of barriers to enter the news industry are inevitable. One also can't help but connect the vigorous partisanship of the world of early newspapers to the Internet's reinvigoration of journalistic partisanship. But "Breaking News" suggests that such comparisons are far too simple. The Internet also provides possibilities to short-circuit or warp the flow of information. China and Singapore have shown that governments that are determined to censor web traffic can largely accomplish such aims. We remember figures like Roger L'Estrange not because they failed but because they largely succeeded. And current battles to preserve the principle of net neutrality suggest that choke points on press freedom also can be controlled by corporations bent on lopsided aggregation and monopoly. Not only is government censorship or private "licensing" of Internet news a virtual possibility; it has already been accomplished—often with the connivance of the medium's innovators.

In the exhibit, Kyle and Peacey include a 1642 pamphlet, "Pigges Coranto or Newes from the North." It expresses the uncertainty of the times in which it was written with clear and familiar wit: "The generall newes is, no body knowes what to make of this World, and that all think there is a better, but its ten to one they do not hit on't, that future ages are more subject to alteration than the present, that the Rumors of warres makes all believe Doomesday is at hand, and hath caused more tales in every mans mouth than truth." "Breaking News" allows for only two certainties in the history of print journalism. The first is that a permanent demand for news has been created, so much so that people will take poor-quality news over none at all. (The official newspapers of the Parliament and the Restoration were avidly read, despite being disliked.) Professional standards in the mainstream media—however well or poorly enforced—have had salutary effects on the accuracy and reliability of news. These standards and benefits are never givens, however, especially if the structures that support them—freedom, capital—are swept away in a tide of suppression or red ink.

The other certainty is that readers will complain about the news that they get regardless of its quality. Indeed, as the author of "Pigges Coranto" writes, "all think there is a better." Jonson's attacks possess such a familiar ring because news is a human enterprise, at the mercy of individual foibles and collective compromises. It always be imperfect, and necessarily of its time, though it soars too when it seeks to be more vital and more perfect—and it has the means necessary to do so. ■

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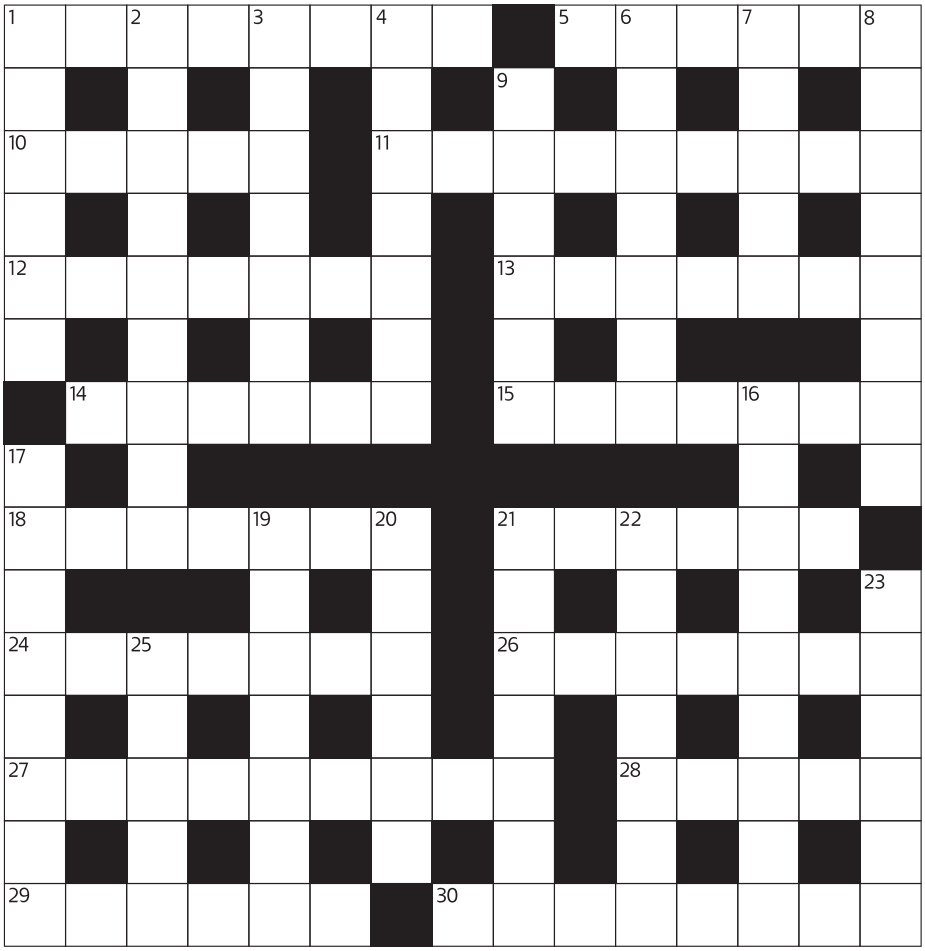

ACROSS

1 and **5** Those who lash out at one taking a little snooze are like one referred to as a little monster. (14)

10 and **11** Considered sufficient by some people. (1,4,2,3,4)

12 Indian chief with nothing sort of close on a combination of it. (7)

13 Is a sea god capable of assuming different shapes in favor of fatback? (7)

14 One doesn't have to be a football player to approach a job this way. (6)

15 Vote in an old god—one whom mourning becomes, even in play. (7)

18 One held for ransom is sort of a ghost, to a point. (7)

21 They supposedly fly, but one shouldn't believe many of them. (6)

24 Kinda angry when a false coin is about to be known as the kind that just floats around! (7)

26 A big one, but something slung lowered him down. (7)

27 Responsible for much ground, but bad grits made a large number sick. (5,4)

28 Sort of rid the queen of what is less damp. (5)

29 Puts one's foot down, getting to take in the paper in the back street. (6)

30, **1** down and **17** down A question posed the checker-up, after dark. (8,4,2,3,5)

DOWN

1 See 30 across

2 They did a lot of fighting during the Civil War, as a way to press a number of little boys with it. (9)

3 Where Mr. Ed could be kept in one's living quarters (as some say) to cut off the tail. (7)

4 The so-called daily grind might be a way to tell on a running contest. (3-4)

6 The wrong name on a single flower. (7)

7 Rather nicey-nicey, to a point—as one might describe a number. (5)

8 Used to control the current flow, but her toast is no good this way. (8)

9 Broken plates could still hold a major element of food. (6)

16 John the naturalist rises to that which one hopes is firma—and loaded with specimens. (9)

17 See 30 across

19 Made sure the figures were right by sitting in on the class? (7)

20 Geometrician who brought up a hint on a hat, as some say. (6)

21 Emblems of royalty concerning the common young lady with a first-class upbringing. (7)

22 Behold! It's inside the practitioner—and has quite a tuneful combination. (7)

23 He rowed people across the Styx—giving a drink (as the Brits say) to Mr. Reagan. (6)

25 Remember this boat? It's in quite a state! (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3151

S	W	E	E	T	E	N	■	O	R	T	R	E	A	T
A	■	N	■	R	■	O	■	V	■	H	■	V	■	U
N	A	T	T	I	E	R	■	E	D	I	F	I	C	E
C	■	R	■	C	■	M	■	R	■	E	■	D	■	S
T	R	A	C	K	■	A	N	D	■	F	I	E	L	D
U	■	I	■	■	■	N	■	U	■	■	■	N	■	A
M	I	N	U	T	E	S	■	E	M	P	A	T	H	Y
■	■	■	■	H	■	■	■	■	■	O	■	■	■	■
G	U	S	H	E	R	S	■	W	A	T	E	R	E	D
U	■	O	■	■	■	O	■	A	■	■	■	A	■	E
S	U	P	E	R	■	F	O	R	■	I	N	N	E	R
S	■	H	■	H	■	T	■	R	■	N	■	C	■	I
E	P	I	T	O	M	E	■	A	B	A	S	H	E	D
T	■	S	■	D	■	N	■	N	■	N	■	E	■	E
S	A	T	R	A	P	S	■	T	R	E	S	S	E	S

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